

RATIONAL
CATECHISM

or, An instructive

Conference

between a

FATHER and a SON.

Licensed August 11th. 1687.

L O N D O N,

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TO THE
READER.

NOrwithstanding that this
ensuing Treatise hath not
been designed by the Author for
public View, yet som Friends of
his, unto whom it has been com-
municated, have thought fit
therin to exceed his Intention.
They do not, however, judg it
needful for them to usher it into

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the VVorld by any prefatory
Discourse. The thing it self is
short, and wil soon speak its own
Errand. VVherfore, without
other Ceremony, they commit
it to the Reader's Judgment, and
to God's Blessing.

T O M Y
Daughters, M & K.

My dearest Daughters,

S Ince the time that Providence separated your Mother and you from me and your Brother, tho al my melancholy Houres have seemed to run exceeding slowly, yet those especially have been unto me the most heavy and irksom, which we were formerly accustomed to imploy in your Brother's and your Instruction. My Pleasure was then great, to observe your daily Profficiency in divers commendable Qualifications, under your Mother's discreet Conduct; and it was consummated in those Evening-Conversations wherin we exercised your discursive Facultys. Wherefore, the Interruption of that Pleasure has not a little augmented unto me the

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Tediousness of her and your Absence.

Now the best Remedy that I have been able to finde for this Trouble has been to exercise my own Thoughts in the same Meditations wherein we formerly exercised yours. And after having don so som while, I resolved in my Minde to draw them up into such a Form as I ordinarily made the Method of my Teaching. You remember, undoubtedly, how I have often told you, That our Knowledge is at least seemingly, if not really, a kinde of Remembrance: I mean, That there ar such Seeds of it in our Nature, as ar always ready to sprout out in the same manner, when they ar assisted by the same convenient Culture; such an Uniformity in our general Ideas of Things, as upon the same Hints and Admonitions, and with the same strictness of Application, wil resolv into the same particular Conclusions. This, I say, has made me digest my Meditations into the Form of a Conference; In the first part of which (it being properly Catechistical)

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cal) the Respondent is led by a natural Order of Questions to draw his Answers out of his own Stock.

In the doing of it I have made use of your Brother's Name, and have thereby given him a peculiar Title to the thing. But as I am desirous that it may be a common Memorial of me unto al of you, when I shal be no more; I therefore make it yours also by this Dedication: And for the same Reason, I have likewise added unto it a Copy of that Advice which I formerly gave him, in such Verse as my unpractis'd Muse then dictated.

The Subject I have treated is the most important of any Subject. And my Design in handling it is to give al of you som real Help to conduct your selvs in the tru Way to Happines: Which I take to be the onely warrantable End of any long continued Study. How far I have succeeded in that Design wil be best known by the Fruits you shal bring forth in your Lives and Conversations. But now that these Fruits may spring

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up the more easily; and without Danger of being choaked by the Weeds of Prejudice, I wil indeavor a little to facilitate the one, and remove the other, by acquainting you with some particular Rules which I prescribed unto my self in this Undertaking, and by which you may take a right Measure of the Performance.

I have often, with Grief, reflected upon the great Differences that ar in Men's Opinions about Matters of Religion. And in seeking out the Causes therof, tho I know many have concurred, yet this has seemed to me one of the most universal, viz. Because Men have not examined things to the Bottom. They have failed in their Foundation-Work. They have too much slighted that Philosophy, which is the Natural Religion of al Men; and which being Natural, must needs be Universal, and Eternal; and upon which therefore, or at least in Conformity unto which, al instituted and revealed Religion must be supposed

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supposed to be built. They have also forsaken the Rule of Right Reason, which onely is capable to produce true Symmetry in their intellectual Buildings; And they have applyed themselves, without any Rule, to the Interpretation of Words and Phrases, which being easily susceptible of various Senses, have produced as many deformed Irregularities. Nay this Disorder has been so great, that, instead of digging in the least for their Foundation, they have frequently begun to frame their theological Systems at the highest Points of Revelation: And in that they have acted as extravagantly, and uncertainly, as that Man should do, Who would undertake to frame a Roof for som Fabric, of whose Dimensions he had no Cognizance. To remedy this Evil, I have begun my Catechisin at the first Principles that I could discern in human Nature, and I have proceeded to build thereupon as gradually and regularly as I have been able. So that I hope the whole Business of Religion,

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gion, whether natural or instituted, wil appear in this Draught to be a steady Prosecution of one and the same regular Design, in God the Author of both. And I am sure that a right Understanding of that Truth wil give great Satisfaction to any considering Minde.

Another thing that has yet more troubled me than the former, has been to observe the sad Consequences in which Mankind has been involved by the forementioned Differences of Opinion. Rash Judgments and Censures, Hatreds and Animositys, Disputes and Wars. The milde and sociable Nature of Man has been thereby transformed into a greater Ferocity than that of Bears and Tygers. And what is the most deplorable Consideration of al, is; That these Mischiefs have been more frequent, and more violent, since the Propagation of Christianity in the World, than before: As if indeed Jesus-Christ, (a) according to his own Expression, were not com to give Peace

(a) Matth. 10.

34
Luke 12. 51.

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Peace upon Earth, but Division and a Sword. Far be it from us, nevertheless, to attribute any such thing to the Genius of his Religion, which consists wholly in Humility, Meekness, Moderation, Benignity, and other such like Social Vertues. No, the Mischief arises from the Perverseness of Men's Spirits, who have turned the wholsomest Food, nay the highest Elixir, into the rankest Poyson. They have not been content with the Simplicity of the Gospel, which is a plain Rule of living wel, but have strove to out-wit one another in finding out hidden Mysterys: And as any one has hit upon a conceited Distinction, he has immediatly called that Fancy the Essence of Christianity. From thence have sprung the various Sects into which the Christian World is divided. And secular Interests being now interwoven with this vainglorious Humor, the distinction of Sects is kept on foot, and looked after, far more carefully than the essential Dutys of Life. This is the deplorable
State

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State of Things at this time. And the Consideration hereof has been the Needle that has chiefly directed my Course in the management of my Subject. For having seen the fruitless Effects of al controversial Undertakings ; Fruitless, I say, in any thing that is truly Good ; but exceedingly too fruitful in nourishing the Seeds of Enmity and al manner of Evil ; I resolved with my self, in undertaking this Work, to avoid studiously al that ever is controverted by any that call themselves Christians ; and to draw up onely a Scheme of such things as they are al agreed in, and which lead directly unto Practice.

These, I say, have been the particular Rules unto which I have thought fit to confine my self, in the Conduct of my main Design. And therefore I advise you to apply your selves onely to the making use of what I have clearly exprest, and to be very reserved in drawing Inferences from my Omissions. Becaus I profess plainly to you that I have not handled every

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every point, that I my self judg useful, but onely such as I judg most useful, and most conformable to the foregoing Rules.

Now, to conclude, I must declare to you that I am strongly perswaded something of this Nature might be of great Use in the World, towards the healing of our sad Divisions in religious Affairs; by drawing men off from their vain Nicetys, to solid and useful Doctrin: Tho I know also that any such Design would, in its first Appearance, be violently opposed by al those who have imbraced the Interest of any particular Sect. If this very Writing of mine should com to the Sight of any such Persons, I am confident, that, tho they should finde nothing exprest in it but what they themselves approve of, yet the Omission of other things which they delight in, would make them condemn it. Al Sectarys ar so fond of their own Badg of Distinction, that they ar ready to cry out against every thing which bears not that Mark, as Antichristian at least, if not Atheistical

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cal and Diabolical. Nevertheless their Approbation, in such a Case as this, is of greater Weight than their Censure: Because in the one they al agree; but in the other they al differ. Neither Papist nor Protestant, may nor any of the Subdivisions on either side, but approve of al Instructions tending to Piety and Vertu; which ar the onely things here aimed at. In that they ar unanimous. But in Matters of meer Speculation, and outward Oeconomy, (which ar the Things here omitted) they ar as opposite to each other as the Poles of the Heavens. I lay hold therefore upon the Encouragement which arises from their general Approbation; and refer unto them the Task of reconciling their own Differences, before I shal esteem the Consideration thereof to be of any great moment. Yet I do not, for at this, in any wise presume to think that these Meditations of mine ar proper for public View. An undertaking of that Nature requires far greater Abilitys in every respect than

mine

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mine ar, and a more intire and uninterrupted Leisure than I injoy. If God see it fitting, he wil in du time raise up som other that may perform it more worthily. In the mean while, however, I hope the Endearment of a Fathers Recommendation wil ad som Strength unto what may be otherwise but weakly inculcated to his Children; and that so this present Performance wil be of som use unto mine, for whom especially I have writ it. I am,

Dear Children,

Your truly affectionate Father.

B. July the 1st.

1686.

The Hapless Delivery

...and more ...
...of ...
...in ...
...other ...
...to the ...
...the ...
...will ...
...may be ...
...to the ...
...will be ...
...for whom ...
...it, I am,

Dear Children,

Your truly affectionate Father,

P. S. the 10th
1888



A RATIONAL CATECHISM:

or an instructive
Conference

between a
FATHER and a SON.

F. **C**Om Son, since we are now at
some leisure from our ordinary
Occupations, and have thereby the ad-
vantage of enjoying that freedom of
Thought which is inconsistent with
the Cares of the World, I am desirous
to take this Opportunity of exercising
thy Minde in Speculations of nobler
Use, and even of universal Influence
upon thy whole Life. Compose thy
self therefore to Seriousness: Lay aside,
and if it be possible, for one hour, for-

B

get

2 A Rational Catechism.

get al that ever thou hast hitherto learnt: Attend only to the genuine Result of thy own present Reflexions: And in that manner answer me with a manly Liberty to what I shal ask thee.

S. I am infinitely obliged to you for your constant care of my improvement in al things laudable, and shal at this time endeavor to observ the Rules you giv me as exactly as possibly I can.

F. Tel me then, in the first place, what it is that thou lovest best.

S. I know you wil not have me distinguish between your self & my Mother, & I hope you doubt not but you ar both of you the joint objects of my best Lov.

F. No matter what I think, or what I doubt of. I desire only to hear thy Thoughts, but to hear them pure and undisguised. That thou may'st not therfore either deceiv thy self, or dissemble with me, consider this case. Suppose both thy Parents and thy self had been any where lock't up together, so long, without Food, that we
were

were at wel nigh ready to dy for Hunger, and that in those Circumstances
 some Friend sent thee privately a smal
 morcel of Meat, capable only to sustain
 thy Life for a few Hours, and withal
 sent word that we could none of us in
 that space have any more. In such a
 case, tel me truly whether thou wouldst
 eat that Meat thy self in private as it
 was given thee; or discover and giv
 it unto either of us.

S. You put me to a hard choice, which
 I would willingly be dispensed from.

F. I know very wel where the Dif-
 ficulty pinches thee. 'Tis not in chu-
 sing, but in declaring thy Choice.
 Wherefore I once again exhort thee to
 deal freely and sincerely with me, and
 I assure thee that I will not be offended
 with any Determination thou shalt
 make, but on the contrary much plea-
 sed to hear one made in Simplicity and
 Truth.

S. What you intimate of Offence af-
 fures me that I need not make any De-

claration at al upon that matter. For I perceiv therby that you know the weakness of my Nature, and see into those secret moyings of my Heart which I am ashamed to discover.

F. 'Tis enough. I wil spare thy Blushes. And now taking for granted that, in such a case as we have supposed, thou wouldst prefer the Preservation of thy own Life before ours, I desire thee to consider again, and tel me whether thou lovest thy self or us the better.

S. What shal I say! You force me to acknowledg that I lov my self better than perhaps I ought to do.

F. That is not the thing that I am now enquiring after, whether this supreme Inclination of *self-love* be wel or il, but onely whether it be so or no. Consider therefore, further, if there be nothing else in Nature that more nearly affects thee than thy self. I mean not Persons, but Things. Dost thou not feel in thy Heart som desire of H-

nor, of Power, of Pleasure, or of Riches? I know thou dost. Tel me therefore in what rank thou placest those things.

S. I do not finde that I lov any of those things simply for themselves; but only as they have relation unto me, and becaus they may be of som Conveniency or Advantage unto me: So that my lov of them is but secondary, and for my own sake. And therefore, for ought I now see, I must remain of Opinion that *I lov my self primarily, and the best of any thing.*

F. No doubt thou dost so: Nor shal I ever advise thee to do otherwise. But here I must admonish thee that the management of this Principle requires thy utmost Care. For upon the right or wrong use therof depends thy Happiness or Misery. Observ therefore that, tho this *self-lov* be a single and general Rule of Nature, yet those things which thou hast wel observed that we lov secondarily ar exceeding

various ; and that nothing is more easy nor more ordinary than for Men to er therein, and out of a wrong conceived Opinion of som good, to place their Affections upon such things as ar really evil. Now the sad Consequence of such il-placed Affections is at the best a certain Frustration. For tho those Persons do obtain that very thing which their Desires ar let out after, yet finding not therein that real Good which they expected, their Disappointment is the same or greater than if they had obtained nothing at al. And this alone is no smal degree of Misery ; but instead of Good to finde an Evil, is a great one ; and to be continually obnoxious to such like Miscarriages, is the greatest. These ar the Effects of Precipitancy, Ignorance, and Error. But, on the contrary, to weigh deliberately the tru Valu of things, to understand it, and accordingly to direct our Affections unto the prosecution of such Objects

as ar truly valuable, these ar the Methods in which our *Principle of self-lov* must be conducted, and in that manner it wil not fail to lead us to a happy Issu. These things I tel thee beforehand that thou mayst be sensible of their Importance, and therupon apply thy Minde with du Circumspection to the discussion of such Questions as I have now design to propound unto thee.

S. Alas, I am at once so sensible both of the Necessity and Difficulty of that Work, and therupon so fearful of miscarrying in it, that I am forced rather to beg the benefit of your Instruction than to expose my self to such an Examination.

F. Be not so diffident of thy self. Take Courage. Remember onely to observ my Advice of attending closely to the genuine Results of thy own Reason, and let us try whither that wil lead us.

Seeing that in the general thou find-

est thy self inclined to *love* or desire nothing but as it appears *some way conducing* to thy own Good, consider a little which of those things that I have propounded to thee appear most so; and tel me therupon which of them thou most desirest. I wil repeat and a little explain them. that thou mayst deliberate maturely. By *Honor* I would have thee understand such a repute and fame of some thing excellent in thy self as may excite Admiration and Respect in others. By *Power* I mean not onely strength of Body, but such an Authority over some number of Men as renders them subject to thy Commands. By *Pleasure* I intend not onely those childish Sports which thou hast hitherto delighted in, and begin'st now to abandon, but al other manner of Delights that may be suited unto the variety of Desires which thy Progress in Years wil bring along with it. And By *Riches* I would have thee represent unto thy self the means wherby
Men

Men ordinarily procure unto themselves al outward Injoyments. Tel me therefore which of these things dost thou now conceiv most conducive to thy Happines.

S. As you represent them they al seem good upon different accounts. And for ought that I know many other things besides these may be represented unto me in the same manner. So that truly I finde a great Difficulty to make any just Comparifon between them, and therupon to determin which hath absolutely the most good in it.

F. What, art thou so unresolved in thy Judgment concerning the valu of these things that thou bearest an equal Indifferency towards them al, and hast no Inclination or Desire after any of them?

S. To proceed with that Precaution which your Lesson requires, it certainly behoovs me to govern my Desires by Judgment, and therefore to restrain al desire of those things until I be convinced of their different valu.

F. Wel,

F. Wel, but for al this, I am of Opinion there is something else, which thou dost already so far understand to be for thy good that thou canst not chuse but desire it earnestly: And I had rather hear thee remark it thy self than that I should name it.

S. Let me see. Thus far we ar com. There ar many things which present themselvs unto my Choice under the appearance of Good; som of which ar indeed such as they seem to be; others notwithstanding al their specious Appearance ar real Evils; but how to discern and distinguish between the one and the other I am yet ignorant. You ask me now what it is that I most desire. Absolutely it is nothing else but *such a Knowledge of al things relating to my own Good as may inable me to chuse and prosecute that which is really most conducive unto it.*

F. I perceiv then that Knowledge is the primary Object of thy Desire. And I am not a little pleased that thou makest

makest it so: Because indeed it ought to be the first Spring of al our Motions. But that is yet too general. Tel me therefore what particular Study of Knowledg thou art chiefly addicted unto. Is it the *Knowledg of God*, of his Essence, of his Attributes, of his Laws? Is it the *Knowledg of Nature*, of the Universe, of Mankind, of thy Self? Is it the *Knowledg of any particular Arts* and Contrivances that ar effected by Men? Or is it *any other thing* that humane Understanding is or may be conversant about?

S. I must answer again unto these Particulars as the former, that I am rather confounded with the Consideration thereof than any ways able to determine which of them is indeed most worthy to be elected. But however this general Circumstance, which I stick close unto, viz. *That my Knowledg may be such as to enable me to chuse and pursue the proper means of my own Happiness*, wil I hope by degrees conduct me

me unto som further Discovery.

F. Thou'ghesest right. It wil infallibly do it. Let that therfore be the Rule of al thy Researches. And now, applying that Rule to those particular heads of Knowledg that I propounded, *God, Nature, Man, &c.* tel me which of them seems to thee the most important Object of thy first Study.

S. My aim being to seek *my own Happiness*, I conceiv easily that it is not obtainable, first, without som competent *Knowledg of my self* who am the Subject of it; next, without som *Knowledg of that Happiness* which is the Object of my Desire; and lastly, without the *Knowledg of the Means* that lead unto it. And therfore I conclude it may be proper enough for me to begin my Study with an Enquiry into *my own Nature*. That, I suppose, wil also shew me what sort of *Happiness* I am capable of: And I esteem that it wil then be seasonable to look after it.

F. Very wel. I like thy Method.
It

It is orderly. And the prosecution of it wil probably bring into consideration whatever other Topic may be material to our Subject. Now, that we may proceed therein, I would have thee reflect seriously upon what thou judgest most observable in thy self, and then tel me *what manner of thing thou takest thy self to be.*

S. I can not but observ that where ever I am I fil som place, even as al other material things that surround me: And therfore what ever I am, I think my self to be framed of the same matter as they ar.

F. So far right. But dost thou not further perceiv som Facultys in thy self which ar peculiar to Mankind, and which none of those other material things that surround us ar endued with?

S. Yes. I have *Sense*, which is not found in Stocks and Stones. And I have further this Faculty of *thinking, reflecting, or reasoning*, wherein you
now

now exercise me, which I take to denote some Excellency in Mankind vastly different from any thing even in Animals, and that not only in Degree but Essence.

F. These two Observations of thine imply this Definition of our selves; *That we are thinking Substances.* But it remains still to be enquired, Whether that forementioned material part of us which thou hast observed to fill some place (or, as others express it, to be extended) I say, Whether that be not the very same thing with that which thinks, and that so this thinking and reasoning be nothing else but an effect produced by the different Modification and Motion of that Matter wherof we are composed; Or, on the contrary, Whether our thinking Faculty proceed from any other different and really distinct Principle. This Consideration is important. Weigh it carefully.

S. I hope I have not been too rash in hinting

hinting already that I ghesse that Faculty to denote som Excellency in us essentially different from any thing in Animals, whose Composition I suppose to be one of the perfectest Productions of modified Matter.

F. I do not say thou hast been too shra in that Assertion. But however, without determining any thing about Animals, the knowledg of whose Nature is of little Consequence to us, I desire to hear thee explain more particularly upon what ground thou fancyest any Principle in thy self to be essentially different from Matter.

S. If I finde any Operation whatsoever in my self abov the Power of matter, I must needs conclude that it proceeds from som Principle of a different Nature.

F. Canst thou giv me any Instances of such like Operations?

S. When I reflect upon the nature of Matter, *its extension, its divisibility, its aptitude to receive never so various*
Medi-

Modifications and Motions, yet, into what ever Form or Motion I conceive it put, I can not for my life finde any such thing to result from thence as that bare Sensation which I am endowed withal. Much less therefore is it to be reputed the Principle of my nobler Facultys.

F. What are those nobler Facultys which thou thinkest meer Matter least capable to produce?

S. They are chiefly *Memory and Ratiocination*.

F. Why dost thou affirm that *Matter is not capable of Memory*?

S. If we were composed onely of meer Matter, then all the Remembrance that we have of any thing would be effected by material Impresses or Characters placed in that part of our Body where that Faculty resides.

F. I grant it. And why may we not believe that it is so?

S. The multitude of things that we remember, would, upon that Supposition,

tion, require such a multitude of different Characters, that it is impossible any such part of our Body wherein that Faculty can be placed should contain them; much less could it retain them in that Order, and represent them in that manner to our Imagination as we find we have them.

R. It does indeed seem absurd that so many various things as we have in our Minde should have there so many distinct material Existencys. And that wil appear yet the more absurd if we observ that amongst those Ideas which replenish our Minde, there are some of them of things immaterial; as Truth and Falschood, Vertu and Vice, Honor and Dishonor, and the like. But let us go on. Explain to me now why *Ratiocination* can not be performed by meer Matter.

S. That needs no further explaining than onely to settle the meaning of the word. By *Ratiocination*, therefore, I understand that Act of the Minde,

word C wherby,

whereby, comparing together such Notions as either have been long or at but newly implanted therein, we from thence draw Consequences, and raise other Notions, which we were formerly ignorant of. Now if *Memory* alone be beyond the Power of Matter, it is past all doubt that this further Act, which revises, and compares such things as are already in the Memory, must needs be much more so.

F. These Difficultys of explaining divers Operations that we finde in our selves, by the Power of Matter, I allow to be invincible. But therefore, since we are still sure that we are capable of those Operations, it remains that thou explain unto me by what other means they are performed, and *shew me that different Principle from which they proceed.*

S. Alas, you now pose me. I am not able to do it. Those very things, *Thinking and Reasoning*, are themselves the most essential Characters that I know

know of that Being which exercises them. I am onely sure that I have them in my self, but how they ar performed I am utterly ignorant.

F. If it be so indeed that thou canst go no further, yet consider now at least what al this disquisition we have hitherto made into Humane Nature amounts unto, and what consequences arise from thence for thy use.

S. My knowledg hitherto amounts to this, That we have in us *two distinct Principles*; the one wherof is *material*, whose eminent property is Extension; the other *immaterial*, whose eminent property is Thought.

F. Those two principles ar termed *Matter* and *Spirit*, or in ordinary speech, *Body* and *Soul*. Let us make use therefore of those received expressions. And now do thou go on to tel me what consequences thou perceivest to arise from this distinction.

S. The most important consequence therof is this, That our *Bodys* and *Souls*,

being of *different natures*, ar disposed for *different enjoyments and sufferings*. The Body is not capable of those pleasures which ar peculiar to the Soul. Nor is the Soul, by any evident necessity, to be esteemed subject unto that change and dissolution which attends the Body.

F. The necessity of the Souls dissolution with the Body is indeed not evident from any thing thou hast observed upon their natures. But neither is this distinction of their natures so full a proof, as might be wisht for, of so comfortable an expectation as that of the Souls duration hereafter. As we proceed further we shal infallibly meet with other arguments that wil yet better confirm those hopes. And other consequences also, of less importance, wil fall occasionally in our way, as we com to treat of other matters with which they ar connected. In the mean while, it is time now that we look back unto the method which thou

first

first proposed it for thy inquiries, and strive to discover *what sort of Happiness* that is which this nature of ours, such as we have described it, is capable of.

S. I conceive the ground and Substance of *all bodily Happiness* to consist in Health. The gratification of our several Appetites may indeed increase the degrees of it, but Health is the most essential ingredient, without which our Bodys will be always miserable. And as for the *Happiness of the Soul*, I think it may be esteemed compleat whensoever we enjoy *intire Satisfaction and contentment of minde*.

F. Since thou distinguishest our Happiness into these two kinds, it is necessary to fix the just estimate of each of them; that we may therupon direct our chief pursuit after what shal appear most important.

S. I have no difficulty to determine the Happiness of the Minde, such as I have described it, to exceed that of
the

the Body: not onely becaus the Soul is the nobler Being, ('tis that which rules the body) - but more especially becaus my Idea of that Happines is the more compleat. For *where the Minde is intirely satisfied there is nothing wanting.* Nevertheless, I would not despise the other. For I confess the business seems to me yet surer when both ar joyned. But that consideration afflicts me: Becaus I observ daily, that, notwithstanding al imaginable precautions, the Bodys of al men ar frequently afflicted with painful diseases, constantly obnoxious to accidental hurts, and inevitably subject to final decay; which things make that sort of Happines imperfect, or the attainment of it impossible. I look therfore chiefly towards the other: but, alas, I look yet in vain. My Soul seems capable of it: but it knows not where to finde it. I beg of you therfore to direct me speedily unto that object of my search: for I now despise

pise al other study in comparison of it.

F. This is what I have already hinted to thee, That the regular pursuit of thy Happiness would lead thee into the consideration of other topics than those thou hast hitherto mentioned. Consider, therefore, the nature of all things in this visible World. Consider the Improvements that are made upon nature, for our conveniency, by the art and contrivance of ingenious men. Are any of these things, or all of them together, capable to confer that sort of *Happiness* which thou judgest to be *peculiar unto thy Soul*?

S. No, they are not. For, being all of them corporeal substances, they can have no operation but upon my Body: or, at least, they cannot affect my Soul but by the means of those bodily Organs unto which it is now united. Since therefore we have already concluded the Perfection of Bodily Happiness to be unattainable, it is in vain for

me to expect that of my Soul by those means.

F. Where then wilt thou look for it?

S. I know not wel. But since it is not to be found in any corporeal existence, nor is my Soul singly able to work her own happiness out of her self, I must either finde it in *something more perfect than my Soul*, or despair of ever finding it at all.

F. What Idea hast thou of any thing more perfect than thy Soul?

S. I have yet no clear Idea of any such thing. But this I am sure of, that *Whatsoever made my Soul is perfecter than it*. The Principle, what ever it be, from which it sprung, must contain in it self more eminent perfecti-
ons than those that I perceiv to be in me.

F. Thou seest how Mankinde is born into this World, one Generation succeeding another; and that we are born at once of such a double nature

as thou hast observed, both Body and Soul. Dost thou therefore intend that answer as a mark of respect unto me, *thy Father*, as the Author or caus of thy subsistence?

S. I am deeply sensible of the respect I owe you. But I confess that I now look further. *'Tis not only the Principle of my own Being, but that of Mankind, which I seek for.* The propagation therof from Father to Son will not serv my turn. For tho I revolv in my thoughts never so many thousand Ages backwards; nay tho I should go so far as to finde one single Man, the first of al men, from whom the Species has been derived; yet I have stil the same question to ask concerning him as concerning me. He made not himself. Who, or what, was it therefore that gave him his Being, and his capacity to beget others like himself? Whatever that was, it must necessarily contain in it great Perfections. And it can be no indifferent thing for us to know,
or

or to be ignorant of it. For, as in the course of Generations there is a strict relation between Father and Son, the latter depending upon the former, and being naturally obliged to certain dutys towards him; so, much more ought we to conclude, that *the general Author of Mankind* does neither abandon his Offspring, nor leave it free from Tys of Duty. And if I could once be so happy as to discover *Him*, and pay those dutys which I ow him, I doubt not but I should therein finde that further Perfection of happiness which I search after.

F. I perceiv this thought has warmed thee. But let us not overshoot our mark. Thou inquirest after the *original Cause* of the first Man. Is that so difficult to conceiv? Consider the various Productions of nature. *This Earth* wheron we liv, our general Mother, being invigorated with the lively heat of our universal Parent, *the Sun*, produces yearly innumerable objects

objects of equal astonishment with this thou stick'st at. Neither are her productions confined to so exact a regularity that we may not imagine her capable to have some times brought forth other manner of Beings than what she now ordinarily does. The odd irregularities that we yet meet withal ever and anon are an undeniable proof of it. And why may not therefore *the first Production of Mankind* be attributed to the happy encounter of some convenient Matter, which, cherished and actuated by a due proportion of nutritive Heat, sprung up into that form we see it? If this do not satisfy, we shall be to seek for the *first Cause* of all other Animals as well as of our selves; and so involved in endless disquisitions.

S. No, no, I now perceive that our disquisitions upon this head will not be endless. We draw near to a resolution of them. Tho' I should grant the possibility of man's producti-

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on in that manner which you have endeavored so plausibly to describe, that dos not at al extricate me from my first difficulty ; but rather intangles me more in it, and obliges me to look further. Let it be so, that both Men and Beasts have been originally produced by the Earth and Sun. Yet, *Who is it that made that Earth and Sun,* and also those other innumerable numbers of glorious bodys that environ us at greater distance? They have al had their *First Caus* as wel as we. And the close relation they have unto one another, with their dependance upon one another, dos evidently demonstrate that the first caus of them al is one and the same. *There is one, onely, original and universal Caus of al things.* And that being so, I must rais my Idea of its perfections yet so much higher than I first conceived them, as the universal frame of al things is a compleater production than that of me in particular. This consideration makes
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me conclude those *Perfections* to be no less than *infinite*.

F. Thou hast rightly concluded. *That Being which formed al other Beings must of necessity be absolutely perfect.* And that is it which we cal G O D. The evidence of this conclusion depends upon such undeniable Principles that it cannot be doubted of. In the order of things that produce one another som one must necessarily be first. Whatsoever that First be, it must contain supereminently in it self al those Perfections that ar scattered amongst the rest. And *the uniting of those scattered Perfections makes the Idea of their Author absolutely compleat.* I have repeated these heads that they may be firmly rooted in thy Memory, and that so the Foundation of this important conclusion may never be shaken. But we must not rest here. *This Idea of God is a Fountain of light.* Let us follow the streams that it sends forth, and see whither they wil carry us. Tel me therefore

therefore more particularly what thou conceivest to be comprehended in this notion of *A Being absolutely perfect*.

S. So great a perfection as that is surpasses my weak capacity. And indeed I cannot imagin it possible for any Man, *being finite*, to comprehend the extent of those Perfections which we have concluded to be *infinite*.

F. Tho we cannot comprehend all, yet we may som. Attend therefore closely to the sense of that definition, and thou wilt not finde it difficult to descend into som Particulars.

S. Thus far indeed I think I see clearly; That *a Being absolutely perfect must have in himself whatever is necessary not onely to his own Being and Happiness, but likewise to the Being and Happiness of his Creatures*.

F. That is one step. Minde now the consequences of that answer, and thou wilt advance further. But do it by degrees. In the first place, examin what thou findest to result from the
first

first part of thy answer, which relates simply to the Being and Happiness of God himself.

S. If he have in himself whatsoever is necessary to his Own Being, (without which he can in no wise be esteemed perfect) and if he have not received any thing from without himself, (which has been already demonstrated, in shewing that he is the First Cause of all things) it then follows that *his Being or Existence is necessary*; that it always has been, and that it always will be; which is to say that *it is Eternal*. Again: If He have in himself whatsoever is necessary to his own Happiness, (without which also he must fall far short of perfection) it follows not onely that his nature is incapable of a final dissolution, but even of any suffering or change; which, being Affections incident to al *Matter*, I make use of the term you have allowed me to signify its contrary, and call him *Spirit*. Then, joyning together

ther these two conclusions, I say that
He is an External Spirit.

F. What are the consequences of the second branch of thy answer, viz. That *He has in himself whatsoever is necessary to the Being and Happiness of his Creatures?* Or rather, first, what is the Reason upon which thou groundest that proposition? For it appears not so evident as the other.

S. The first part of that proposition is evident enough from the very existence of the Creatures. For since they are, and are from him, it is clear that he has in himself whatsoever was or is necessary either to produce or to conserve them. And to prove the second, (I need only observe wherein the general Happiness of the Creatures consists; which I conceive to be in their attainment of that End for which their Author designed them. For it cannot be doubted but He, who had in himself the power to produce them, can much more easily by the same power conduct them

them to that end for which he produced them. So that *I finde in him the Original spring both of the Being and Happiness of all things.*

F. Proceed then to draw the inferences of that proposition, as it relates to the Creatures.

S. His giving Being and Happiness unto the Creatures seems to me to imply principally his Sovereign Perfection of *Goodness*, of *Wisdom*; and of *Power*. His *Goodness* is apparent in the design of all his works; his *Wisdom* in the contrivance of them, and his *Power* in the execution. The one prompts, the other directs; and the third accomplishes. These I think are the main Branches into which that consideration may be divided: and as we can perceive the connexity of others with these, we may safely refer them to the same original stock of *absolute perfection*; which is *God*.

F. Wilt thou go on to particularize any

any others that thou findest to have their Rise from these?

S. That pursuit would be long. And I know not whether at this time it be very needful. For other Inferences wil of themselves occur in particular occasions. And in the mean while I perceiv that we have in these three a solid Foundation of that Happiness which I am seeking after. For seeing my notion of God's *Wisdom* assures me that he *knows* what is best, and his *Goodness* and *Power* that he is both *willing* and *able* to do it, I cannot doubt but it is *already don*.

F. What, dost thou mean that by this discovery thou art now actually stated in that Happiness which thou wast a while ago inquiring after? For that is best for thee. And thou seemest to infer that whatsoever is best is already don.

S. No. Tho I am assured that *whatsoever is best for the Universe is don*, yet my comprehension of that general good is too short to determin me in the
Particular

particular application of it. On the contrary, rather, since I finde my self to be yet short of that Happiness which my nature is capacitated for, I conclude that it is in order to som more general good that I am so. And, in effect, tho I cannot comprehend the depth of al God's workings, yet I easily see a possibility that it may be for the advantage of the whole that som sort of Creatures pass unto their Perfection by degrees. And probably I my self may be of that sort. This state wherein I now am may be a Passage. Which being so, it is sufficient for me in particular that *I am put into the Way*, and have a Capacity given me to work out in time that further Degree of Happiness which I yet want. And that I am really in such a Condition is clearly deducible from the forementioned triple Idea of God's Perfections. For, since I am capacited for a further Degree of Happiness than what I now injoy, and since I am naturally

bent upon the pursuit of that Happiness, it is unconceivable that infinite Goodness, Wisdom, and Power, should have given me that Capacity and that bent of Nature to be always frustrated. I say therefore that my attainment of it in the end, provided I swerve not from the way, is as certain as if already effected.

F. Since thou wilt not now pursue this search into the particular Perfections of the Deity any further, consider with thy self once again how far we are yet com; and see, according to thy own proposed method, which way thou ought'st next to bend thy thoughts.

S. I can do it easily. For I take care not to let slip that Clew which you directed me in the begining to hold fast. I seek my own Happiness. In order to that, I have considered what I am; what is the chief Happiness that I am capable of; and where that Happiness is to be found. I have determined that the noblest part of my Nature

is Spiritual ; that my chief Happiness must therefore also be Spiritual ; and that it can onely be found in God. I have proceeded to take som view of those Perfections which the Idea of God presents unto me. And there we sticke. Methinks therefore it lyes now naturally before me to look after *the Way or means that lead unto this Happiness* which I have proposed for the ultimate object of my search.

F. 'Tis wel observed. Continue therefore to reflect attentively upon what thou hast hitherto discovered ; and try stil, in thy own thoughts, whether the consideration therof will direct thee unto those means or no.

S. I have indeed perceived som glimmering therof al along as we have proceeded, but now methinks I begin to discover a clearer light. You were pleased to turn me aside as I was once hinting at the consideration of our lying under som tys of Duty towards the Author of our Being : and I acknowledge

ledg that you did it with reason. For, as I had not then cleared up to my own minde the Idea of that Author, it would have been impossible for me, in those circumstances, to have framed any right apprehension of my duty towards him. But now that I have attained to som competent knowledg both of *him and my self*, I doubt not but *from the comparison of those Ideas I shall finde som Rule of duty to result.* And I doubt yet less that *my following that Rule is the direct and only means of bringing me to my desired Happiness.*

F. Thou sayst thou doubtst not of these things. But, once again, why so fast? Why may it not yet be doubted whether He have given us any such Rule or no? What importance is it to him what course we take? We see that al Men, who follow never so various ways of living, arrive indifferently, and without distinction, at their last end, which is the Grave. And what Happiness then canst thou propose

pose unto thy self to finde in one course rather than another?

S. I perceiv that I have been too hasty, in starting a double conclusion without explaining the premises from whence I draw it. My minde has run quicker than my tongue, and has caused my expressions to take that leap which your questions now bring me back again to walk over more leisurely. I must do it therefore Step by Step, and endeavor to tread sure as I go along.

F. Do so. I wait thy Motion.

S. I must prove then, in the first place, that the Author of our Being, which is God, *has really obliged us unto som Duty*; in the next place I must inquire *what that Duty is*; and in the last place, examin *how my Happiness arises from it*. My first Proposition is general. And methinks this general Consideration may serv to clear it. If God be the Author of al things, then *Whatsoever we finde our selves obliged unto by*

the Nature of things; I mean either of God, of our Selves, or of Others; we are obliged unto it by God himself, who framed and disposed things in that manner.

F. Yes, if we are under any such obligation, I will not deny but that obligation is laid upon us by God. But how does it appear that we are under any such obligation at all?

S. If I mistake not, we have already sufficiently established that, in the beginning of our inquiries. The desire that every man has to procure his own Happiness is general, and whatsoever is general is natural. The ways indeed in which men seek it are different, and therefore some of them must necessarily be preternatural. But the general bent after, and desire of Happiness, is the same in all men, and therefore the pursuit of it is an Obligation laid upon us by Nature herself; that is to say, a Duty enjoined us by God.

F. Grant that the search of Happiness

ness in general be a natural inclination, and by consequence our duty; yet, since all men are subject to err in the particular ways of pursuing it; what can it avail us to know in general that we are under such an obligation, while we have no rule to direct us in the particular observance of it?

S. You are pleased in that Question to make a Supposition which I must not grant. The Errors of some Men do not prove that we have no Rule given us to walk by; but onely that, if there be any such Rule, those Men do not observe it. And I think we have already agreed upon a Principle from which it will necessarily follow that we have some such Rule given unto us, whether they observe it or no. If it be inconsistent with our Idea of God that he should have given us this bent of Nature after Happiness, and at the same time have subjected us to a perpetual Frustration (which I prove to be inconsistent, in that such a Frustration is

is real Misery, and that it is directly repugnant to his Goodness to have framed Creatures on design to make them miserable) I say then, it is absolutely necessary that he should have given us some Rule whereby to direct us in the particular Pursuit of that Happiness, which he has obliged us to seek after : because otherwise we should be for ever frustrated of it. Which is absurd.

F. Canst thou show me a Rule which is capable to guide us exactly in this Pursuit, and which is general to all Mankind? For such it must be, or none.

S. I think I can. And if I had not ghest at it beforehand, this last Character which you require in it is too evident a Distinction to leav any Doubt therupon. In a Word. *The Rule of all our Actions is, or ought to be, Right Reason.* This Faculty of Reasoning judges of Truth and Error, of Good and Evil; weighs one thing

thing with another, and chuses the best. The Progress you have already helped me to make therein assures me of a greater Perfection hereafter than what I have yet attained unto. I now indeed grope after an unknown way, and advance not without some Doubts and Fears; But I am perswaded that a continued sincere, and strict Application to this Exercise wil produce a steady firmness of Judgment, capable to direct my Practice. And, above all, I say that your last forementioned Character takes away all Doubt upon this matter. For if God have given any such Rule unto Mankind (as it hath been already proved that he must of necessity have given some) it can be no other than this Rule of *Reason*. Becaus none other, than this, is or can be *General*: And this being so, must therefore be esteemed *Natural*; that is to say *from God*; and by consequence also *Sufficient*.

F. I wil not just dispute against these general Arguments, which thou hast made use of to prove that God has obliged us unto som sort of Duty, and given us the means of knowing it. But however, I shal esteem the thing yet better proved, as wel as illustrated, when I shal see thee go through thy next proposed Enquiry with any Accuracy, and shew me those particular Dutys that we ar obliged unto.

S. To do that, I must refer our Dutys unto certain principal Heads, which are very obvious, and from which all particular Branches take their Rise. They ar these. *To God, to our Neighbors, and to our Selvs.* And I chuse to begin with the last of them. Let us reflect therfore upon our own Nature, which we have concluded to be composed of two Principles, Matter and Spirit, or Body and Soul. These two Principles in us contest frequently between themselves, drawing several ways. The Body delights onely in the present

present gratification of its Senses, without knowing any Bounds therof, or foreseeing any Consequences. The Soul has not onely its own Delights of a more refined nature, but it also judges concerning those of the Body. It weighs a sensual Gratification with a spiritual Inconvenience, a present Good with a future Evil; and it is able upon the Comparison of all Circumstances to chuse what is most conducive to the Happiness of the whole Man. Now from this simple Consideration of our own Nature, I affirm that there results this plain Duty, incumbent upon us, *viz. That we ought to keep our Bodys in continual Subjection unto our Souls, as Servants unto their Masters.* And the reason of that Duty wil appear yet more evident by the Mischiefs that follow a contrary Practice. For where this Subordination is not established, all corporeal Gratifications grow excessive: And the Excess of such Gratifications

cations breeds endless Inconveniencys. Those of eating and drinking cloud and darken the Understanding, by the gross Vapors which they send up into the Brain. Others enervate the Strength of the Body. The very Desire of any of them with earnestness excites Passions, breeds Disorder in the Minde, and unfits it for Deliberation. And the too frequent Indulgment thereof possesses the whole Soul, and stifles all Thoughts of any nobler Imoyment. In a Word therefore, *it is our indispensable Duty to use great Moderation in all bodily Satisfactions, and to preserve the absolute Dominion of the Soul over the Body unviolated.*

F. This is very wel. But it is nothing else than what thou sayd'st even now ; That we ought to govern all our Actions by Reason.

S. I am very glad it is so. And I hope what I shal have occasion to say further in the remainder of my Researches wil continu to prove so likewise :

wise: I mean that *Right Reason and Tru Interest wil be always found to be but one and the same thing.*

F. Proceed then, in thy own Method, to what thou thinkest fit to explain in the next place.

S. My next Task is to inquire into those particular *Dutys which we are obliged unto towards our Neighbors.* And that I may discern them clearly, I judg it convenient to take a View of my own Circumstances, and of the Relations wherein I stand towards others. I consider my self as born naked into the World, incapable to provide or help my self even with the Necessarys, much less with the Conveniencys, of Life; and therefore standing in absolute need of others Assistance. From that Estate, by the Assistance of others, I grow up gradually unto som measure of Strength, and becom capable of many things. But with al that Capacity I am yet far short of being able to provide alone
for

for my own Subsistence. For, in effect, that Provision implys no less than to cultivate the Earth, and prepare the Fruits of it for Food and Rayment; to kil the Beasts, and prepare likewise their Flesh for Meat, and their Skins and Fleeces for cloathing; to dig up Stones out of the Entrails of the Earth, to hew down Trees, and build Houses for Defence against the Injuriys of Weather; The least of which things requires so many Instruments, wherewithal they ar to be don, so much Art and Labor in the doing, that few Men ar capable of executing any one of them without taking Advantage and making use of som thing don by others; much less can any Man be ever capable of al. Nevertheless al these things ar so absolutely necessary for us, that it is not possible without them to preserv Life; or tho it could be preserved, yet even Life it self in that Condition would not be desirable. This being so, I have continual
need

need of my Neighbor's assistance in one thing or another : and my Neighbor has the same need of mine. To obtain his I must therefore give him mine ; and to obtain mine he must give me his. It is not to be had on either side at any other price. Thus *the Necessity of mutual Succor tyes all Mankind together in one common band.* It makes it as necessary for each individual Person to endeavor the good of the whole as of himself in particular : because he cannot enjoy the one but in contributing towards the other. There is the obligation of interest which enforces the duty. And our duty resulting from hence is plainly this ; *That we bear an universal Love and Goodwill towards all Men.* Or more particularly, *That we look upon our Neighbor's concernment as our own,* and that so we be as ready to serve him in any occasion as we desire he should be to serve us ; Nay, that we look upon the general Concernment of Mankind as far more

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important

important than our own, and that so we prefer the public Good, and the establishment thereof upon Principles of universal rectitude, before any sinister private Advantage. This I take to be a summary of that Law which Nature, or God, obliges us unto towards our Neighbors. And whoever carries this in his minde wil need no great comment to teach him his Duty in particular occasions. This hearty Benevolence prohibits the doing any manner of Injury, and enjoyns the doing all manner of Good. It lays also the foundation of Government, and it obliges us to Truth and Justice, and to all other vertues which are necessary to the preservation of Societys. In fine, it secures the Happines of each man in this World, as much as that Happines can possibly be secured. And therefore I conclude again, that *this Friendly Disposition towards all men is a reciprocal Duty, nay the Fountain of all such*

such Duty, required of each man by God himself.

F. I wil not interrupt thee with any objections. Go on to thy next head.

S. My next and last head is to examine what ar those particular *Dutys* which we owe unto God himself. I represent therfore unto my self that Idea of absolute Perfection which we have attributed to the Author of our being. And the very first sight of so daz'ling an Excellency strikes me down before him in humble Adoration. The further contemplation of it shews me my duty of submitting patiently unto al the dispensations of his Providence; as being assured that whatever is ordered by such an *Almighty* Principle of infinit *Wisdom*, and *Goodness*, cannot chuse but be for the best. I see therein the ground of my praising him for what I have, and praying to him for what I want: becaus he is the distributor of al things. I am enamoured

with the beauty of his Perfections, and thereby drawn into an ardent desire of injoying those of them which are communicable, and of imitating those of them which are imitable, according to the degree of my capacity. That reflection fixes my thoughts particularly upon his *Wisdom* and *Goodness*: the first of which reminds me to *guide all my Actions by that measure of Wisdom*, that principle of Reason, which he has given me: the other is a new incitement to all *Acts of Kindness towards those that are within my reach, and to an unlimited Benevolence towards all men*. All these things, and all the rest that I have deduced from former Heads, are enforced upon me by the Authority of this supreme Law-giver. And this is the *Perfection of all my Duties*, that I perform them in Obedience to his command, and with so exact a Sincerity, as may give me confidence before him who beholds the inmost Secrets of my Heart.

F. Methinks thou hast omitted, upon this last head, to shew how these particular dutys towards God com to have the force of a Law upon us. At least thou hast not don it, as in the former heads, by shewing their connexity with our Intrest.

S. If I have not don it so expressly as I should have don, yet I think I have tacitly implied it. Besides that al those Dutys I have hinted at, ar evident means of rendring me acceptable unto my Maker, and consequently of obtaining the fruits of his favor, which must needs include a high degree of Happiness; I say, besides that, the last ingredient which I required in al our Dutys (I mean that of Sincerity) dos carry along with it its own Reward, viz, that Satisfaction of Minde which is not otherwise to be had, and which we have som while ago concluded to be the highest degree of Happiness that we can here attain unto. So that this Set of dutys, as wel as the rest, have the in-
forcement

forcement of Interest to makethem a Law.

F. Well ; since thou hast now gon thro' thy proposed Classes of duty, I wil at this time take a little review of what thou hast said ; that we may see whether any difficulty yet remain, and what further is to be inquired after. Upon our Moderation in corporal injoyments, and the apt disposition of our bodily Organs, follows a clearness of Minde capable to direct us in the choice and prosecution of our greatest Good. Upon our Kindness towards others follows their kindness towards us, and the effects of that Mutual Kindness ar private conveniency, and public security. Upon our humble and sincere Adoration of an al-seeing God follows that inward Comfort and Satisfaction of minde which surpasses al other Worldly Felicity. And upon the contrary of al these practices follow the contrary inconveniencys. So that *our Obligation unto these natural Dutys is confirmed by the natural Effects of their Observance*

Observance or Neglect ; that is to say, by Rewards and Punishments. This is the substance of thy discourse upon those heads. Let us now examin if it be clear and uncontestable. I ask thee therfore ; Do these Consequences so necessarily follow their Premises, these Effects their Causes, that whoever practises those Dutys cannot fail to obtain that Happiness, and who neglects them to fall into those Inconveniencys that we have discoursed of?

S. I must acknowledg that those two first sorts of Happiness, which I have described as appertaining to the two first Classes of Duty, do not indeed so necessarily follow those Dutys but that they may somtimes fail. The Soul has not so absolute a Superiority over the Body as not to be somtimes disturbed thereby in her Functions. And the kindest natured Persons are somtimes exposed both to Want and Injury. Nevertheless those Dutys are the plain and ordinary means to avoyd

these Inconveniencies. The first of them goes as far as the Frailty of our bodys can admit; & the second would be Infal-
lible if it were universally received. The Rule therefore must not be wholly re-
jected because of some few Exceptions; especially when those exceptions arise
(as here) from extraneous causes. But however that be, the condition of In-
tegrity, which I mentioned under the last Classis of Duty, and required as a
necessary circumstance in all the rest, does necessarily and infallibly produce
the Happiness which I ascribed to it.
*An Upright Conscience establishes the Minde in an unshaken Peace, and fills it
with joys unspeakable.* That therefore
supplies the deficiency of the rest, and
is an enforcement sufficient to make
the Law, which enjoyns all the fore-
mentioned Dutys, indispensable. For
tho it do not give an absolute, compleat
Happiness, a Happiness without all
allay, yet it gives the best that our
Natures in this World are capable of.

F. This would indeed be wel, if it were really found to be so in practice as thou imaginest it in Idea. But I doubt it is otherwise. Nay I must tel thee plainly, that in the course of this World, the Despisers of those Rules do oft times seem to injoy that very Felicity which the Observers of them seek in vain. *Those that indulge themselves in bodily Excesses, have nevertheless their spiritual Facultys both quick and strong. Those that have no Bowels of tenderness towards their Bretheren, advance themselves in Riches, Honor and Power, by Fraud and Violence. And those that have no Sense of a Deity content themselves in these wordly Successes; and so injoy Tranquility of Minde, without looking any further.* These things being so, thou wilt do wel to consider whether they do not in som measure invalidate thy reasonings, or interfere with thy conclusions.

S. Yes, they seem indeed to do it. For if the Reward of Duty do not follow

low upon the Performance of Duty, but rather upon a Practice directly contrary unto it, then at al the Tys of Duty broken, and Mankinde let loose to al manner of disorders. I say this seems to be the Consequence of that State of things which you have now represented. But I think I have the Solution of that difficulty ready at hand. And, first, from the Absurdity of that consequence I argu in general, that the thing is either not so as you have represented it, or else that that Consequence is not necessary. For, if there were no Restraint of an inward Law in the Hearts of Men, with regard to the general Good, then would al Means of obtaining a private Advantage be indifferently made use of as they might appear likely to giv Success; and by that means Fraud and Violence, which reign now but in som few disorderly Persons, would then overspread the Earth, and expose al Mankind to eternal Confusion or utter Ruin: Which

Which Consequence I say is so inconsistent with the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of God, that it is in no wise to be admitted. I proceed therefore to a more particular Examination of the Question: And, in the next place, *I deny the Supposition, that those Men of Excess and Violence, those that have no regard either to God or Man, do ever attain to any competent Degree of tolerable Happiness.* They may indeed accumulate Riches, and other worldly Enjoyments, but that is all they can do. Their Excesses will infallibly, by degrees, obscure and weaken their Intellects; and the Conscioufness of the Wrong they do unto others will gnaw their Mindes, with Jealousys and Fears of the like Returns from those they have injured: Which is more than sufficient to corrupt their Joys. If they have any Intervals of Tranquility, it proceeds onely from a stupid senselessness; and not being built upon a true Knowledg of their own Condition,

nor

nor supported by any Idea of the Deity, it can be of no durance. Thus all their pretended Happiness dwindles into a meer Nothing; and so leavs the Objection arising from it without any Force. But if it should stil be urged, that these worldly Injoyments ar so accommodated to our worldly Condition, that, in spite of al Reasoning, our very Sense wil force us to acknowledge that they ar necessary Ingredients to our Happiness here; and if it be therupon argued, that the unequal Distribution of them takes away the Force of that Law which I have al along endeavored to establish: To this I wil answer, in the last place, by conceding the Supposition, and denying the Consequence. Grant that deceitful and violent Men obtain a greater Share of those things than do the Candid and Benign. What then? I must not immediatly reject things already proved; but rather first try whether this Supposition be really inconsistent therwith.

therwithal or no. And in reflecting thereupon, I think I see their Agreement so easy, and so happy, that, instead of loos'ning any Joint of my Fabric, it wil prove the last Pin to fasten al the Parts of it indissolubly. I review therefore my Idea of the Divine Perfections, and from the *Conjunction of Wisdom and Goodness* I finde another of equal Evidence (not yet named) to result ; and that is *Justice*. By his Justice I am assured that, *if he have obliged us unto any sort of Duty by the expectation of Reward, and forbidden the contrary by fear of Punishment, he wil not, he can not, fail to confer that Reward upon al those that shal perform that Duty, and inflict that Punishment upon the Transgressors of it.* Since therefore it happens that this Retribution of Rewards and Punishments in this World, however considerable in general, yet is not so perfectly exact in every particular, as to be voyd of al Difficulty ; I hereupon cal to minde
the

the Hopes I saw of a *future Being*, when I considered the nature of my Soul as capable of it; and now I see not onely that *Possibility*, but even an *Absolute Necessity of the thing*. For if God be perfectly Just, and if the Rewards and Punishments which his Justice engages him to distribute or inflict, be not distributed or inflicted in this World, we must necessarily have some Subsistence hereafter, in which Estate he may distribute or inflict them; and he then wil certainly and infallibly do it. This, I say, not onely answers your Objection, but it adds a new Force to al that I have hitherto endeavored to establish.

F. I acknowledg it dos so. And therefore I wil now trouble thee with no more Objections, but expect the Prosecution of what thou hast further proposed unto thy self to inquire into.

S. Truly I do not see what further I have to prosecute. I had indeed pro-

propounded to examin how my Happiness, that perfect Happiness which I thirst after, would result from the observance of those Dutys that I am bound unto. But you have already brought me to the Resolution of that Inquiry. *Since the Almighty God is obliged by his Own Essential Properties, upon Condition of that Observance, to confer that Happiness upon me in a future Life, I have but to walk steadily in the Way that he has prescribed (I mean in that way which the Nature of Things, the Course of universal Good, obliges me to) and I am assured that I shal not fail to obtain it.*

F. Ad onely one word further, and tel me *what sort of Happiness that is which thou expectest to obtain in another Life,* and I have don.

S. It is impossible for me to describe that future Happiness in such a manner as those things that ar the Objects of my Senses, or matter of present Injoyment. But it suffices me to know
that

that it wil be suited to my Soul; that therefore it wil advance the Facultys of my Soul to their highest Degree of Perfection, which is to say, into a Conformity unto the Divine Nature, from whence they sprung: And that its Duration wil be Eternal. This is an Abyss in which my Thoughts ar drowned: No wonder therefore if Expressions fail me.

F. I expect no more from thee. Thou hast followed thy natural Light so far as it shines with any Clearness. What further remains to be known, that may be useful in the pursuit of Happiness, has been communicated to Mankind by Divine Revelation, and is therefore a Subject of Instruction, rather than Reflection: It is rather to be listned unto, than studyed for. I wil therefore som other time endeavor to explain unto thee my Conception of those things. But in the mean while I advise thee to revolv oft in thy own Minde the Force of al these Considerations

rations that we have now gon thro-
row. They wil ingage thee to an
exact Performance of thy Duty in al
Occasions. And the Performance of
that Duty wil not onely carry along with
it the Reward of a temporal Felicity,
but secure an eternal one.

S. Dear Sir, I beg of You not to
defer the Instruction You promise me,
until another Time. Since there re-
mains further Matter to be inquired
into, I can have no Rest til I have dis-
cuss't it. My Minde is now so war-
med with these Things, that there can
be no Time fitter for me than the
present, to continue the Meditation
of them. And besides also, We ar al-
ready so far advanced upon our Way,
that I cannot think our remaining
Journey wil be very long. I earnest-
ly intreat you therefore to continue
your Instructions, without Interrupti-
on, to the End. And seeing I am,
henceforwards, to learn more directly
by your Lessons, than heretofore,
I
while

while you were pleased to lead me in the Exercise of my own Reflexions; I desire you now to suffer me to propose such Inquiries as I finde my self least capable to comprehend; that so your Lessons, being properly suited to my Wants, may the more easily supply them, and remove al Doubts or Difficultys that shal arise.

F. Seeing thou art not wearyed with this Conversation, I am not onely willing, but shal take Pleasure to continu it. I approve also of the Method thou hintest at, of thy proposing, and my resolving, what Questions or Difficultys thou mayst finde needful. The Pursuit therof, with such Attention of Minde as thou hast hitherto exercised, wil stil lead us, in a natural Order, unto the End of our Way. Do thou therefore, at this time, act the Part of the *Catechizer*; I am content to be the *Respondent*.

S. That Condescension is suitable to your accustomed Goodness: And I
shal

shall use utmost Care, in the Acceptance thereof, not to transgress the Bounds of my Duty. The first Difficulty then, that I desire to propound, arises from your last Words. Since you acknowledg that those Discoverys which are made by the *Light of Nature*, are capable to conduct a Man to eternal Felicity, *I do not readily perceive what further Need there was of any other Discovery by Divine Revelation, nor what need there is now* (I say, upon that Supposition) *for me to look into it.*

F. The need of some further Help than what the meer *Light of Nature* affords us, is urgent upon Two Accounts. The one, *to open our Understandings*, the other, *to incline our Wills*. These Discoverys that we have thereby made, are the Effect of deep Meditation, which the Vulgar sort of People are not capable of. They therefore have need to be instructed therein by some Person of such Credit as may

deserv to be trusted upon his Word. And as for those who discern these Things in som measure, by the Strength of Reason, even they, too frequently, do either slip or break the fine-spun Thread of their own Consequences, and stand in need of a stronger Force to subject them unto their Duty.

S. I now perceiv that Necessity; and therefore intreat you, in the next Place, to shew me how it has been supplied.

F. This has been admirably don by the coming of *Jesus Christ* into the World: *By his Doctrin, his Life, his Miracles, his Death and Resurrection.* 'Tis, in a Word, the *Christian Religion* which givs us new Degrees both of *Light and Strength*, surpassing those of common Nature.

S. You wil oblige me in explaining these Things more particularly.

F. Remember then that thou hast already demonstrated, That to obtain the perfect Happiness we aspire unto, there

there ar no other Means afforded us than the hearty and sincere Compliance with those Dutys that ar required from us. I say, there ar no other Means that we our selvs can make use of, or at least, that can be effectual without this. For whatever other Motives may have influenced the secret Counsels of the Almighty, to incline him to bestow that Happiness upon any Number of Men, they ar abov our Comprehension, and ought therefore to be *discourfed of with great Reservedness*, or rather *admired in humble Silence*. We ar taught that (a) a Deut. Secret Things belong unto the Lord our God: But those things which ar revealed belong unto us, and our Children, for ever; that we may do al the Words of his Law. That being so, I wil undertake no further than

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to consider how the coming of Jesus-Christ into the World is helpful to us in the performance of those Dutys which we have determined to be the onely Way which leads unto Happiness.

S. I desire also nothing further. For I comprehend already that the Uniting, in this manner, *revealed*, and *natural* Religion (if in effect they are capable of such a Union) will render the whole Business of Religion so uniform, that I shall the more easily digest it in my Minde, and have need to make the fewer Objections. Wherefore I beseech you to continue your own Design.

F. In the first Place, I say, That *the Doctrin of Jesus-Christ affords us one very great Help* towards the Performance of our Duty, in that it drives

at

at the greatest *Purity*, and is delivered with the greatest *Perspicuity* imaginable. None that read his Sermon upon the Mount, or the other Instructions that are interspersed throughout his whole History, and the other Writings of his Disciples, but may clearly understand what is required from them. (b) *Spiritual Adoration*.

(c) *Purity and Integrity of Heart*.

(d) *Unblameableness of Life and Conversation*. (e) *A Conscience void of Offence both towards God and towards Men*. These Principles are frequently inculcated throughout the whole New-Testament, and explained in numerous Instances of particular Dutys. But the Effence of all is said to be (f) *Love*: which our Savior himself extending both to God & (g) *Man*, teaches us that thereupon de-

b Joh. 4. 24.
c Matt. 5. 8.
1 Cor. 5. 8.
d Phil. 2. 15.
1 Thes. 2. 10.
1 Tim. 5. 7.
1 Pet. 2. 12.
e Act. 24. 16.
2 Cor. 1. 12.
1 Pet. 3. 21.
1 John 3. 19.
20.

f Rom. 13.
8, 10.
1 John 2. 9.
13.
g Matt. 22.
37. 13.

pend both the *Law* and the
 g Matt. 10. *Prophets*. Intensively, (g) to-
 37.
 Luke 14. 25. *wards God, our Lov must be su-*
perlative; extensively, towards
 h Matt. 5. *(h) Man, it must be universal.*
 43. In a word, the Sum of al his
 Instruction is reduced to these
 e Tit. 2. 12. *three Heads, of (i) living Sober-*
ly, Righteously, and Godlily,
 which ar the very same into
 which thou didst even now
 distribute our Duty. But ne-
 vertheless the Advantage Man-
 kind receivs by our Savior's
 teaching that same Doctrin is
 b Matt. 11. *very great: Because he has*
 25.
 1 Cor. I. 26, *don it with a Clearness suited*
 27.
 g Matt. 7. *to the (b) meanest Capacity, and*
 29.
 Luke 4. 32. *with an (c) Evidence irresistible.*
 1 Cor. 2. 4.

S. I acknowledge that Advan-
 tage to be really great: But as
 you have hinted also at som
 others, I humbly intreat you to
 continu to illustrate them.

F. The

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F. The next *Advantage* that I observed to accru unto Man-
kinde by Jesus-Christ arises
from his Life. He has in that
given us an Example of Obe-
dience to the Wil of God, both
in (c) doing and in (d) suffering :
An Example of (e) Humility, (f)
Purity, and (g) Meekness of Spi-
rit : An Example of (h) Lov
and (i) Benevolence towards one
another : A (k) Perfect Example
in respect of every Duty that
he requires from us : And an
Example which we ought ther-
fore to (l) follow. This is an
Advantage that was not af-
forded either to Jews or Hea-
thens. And it is no smal one.
For it both removes al Doubts
that might have risen about
the Interpretation of his Com-
mands, by shewing us their
Meaning in their Perfor-
mance ; And it strengthens us
against

e Matt. 3. 15.

John 17. 4.

d Matt. 20.

39.

Luce 22. 42.

Heb. 2. 10.

i Pet. 2. 23.

e Phil. 2. 7, 8.

f i Pet. 2.

22.

g Matt. 11.

29.

2 Cor. 10. 1.

h John 15.

12, 13.

i Act. 10. 38.

k Pet. 1. 15.

l John 13.

15.

i John 2. 6.

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against all Difficultys that might have appeared therein, by shewing us that Performance accomplished by one

6 Heb. 2. 17. *who was in all (b) things made like unto us, and subject unto the same Infirmitys as our selves,*
 e Heb. 4. 15. *yet (c) without Sin.*

S. I acquiesce in this also ;
 And shal listen with Pleasure to the rest of your Observations.

F. A Third Advantage arising unto Mankind by Jesus-Christ, is from the Consideration of those Miracles that were wrought by him. That Testimony was necessary to make his Doctrine more easily received.

For (d) without Signes
 and Wonders Men would not as-
 sent to it. But when they saw
 the Miracles which he did, they
 (e) believed in him, and concluded
 that he was a Teacher (f) sent
 from

38.
 d Matt. 12.

John. 4. 48.

f Cor. 1. 22.

e John 2.

John 6. 14.

f Matt. 11.

2. &c.

Luke 7. 19.

&c.

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from God, becaus (f) they no ^{f John 3.2.}
 Man could do such things except
 God were with him. Thus
 God (g) approved him unto the ^{g Act. 2.22.}
 World by Miracles, and Won-
 ders, and Signes, which he
 wrought amongst them: And
 that gave him Credit and (h) Au- ^{h Matt. 7.}
 thority abov other Doctors, and ^{29.}
 added an extraordinary (i) Power ^{Mark. 1.22.}
 unto his Words. ^{i Luk. 4.32.}

S. This indeed is of great
 Weight; And that not onely
 in it self, but it ads also a new
 Force unto your two forego-
 ing Remarks. For when Je-
 sus-Christ had both taught and
 shewn Men what they were
 to do, they might stil have de-
 manded (as indeed som of
 them did) by what (k) Authority
 he required those Things at
 their Hands. But when, by
 the visible Effects of his Di-
 vine Power, he had demon-
 strated

k Matt. 21.
 23. &c.
 Mar. 11. 28.
 &c.
 Luk. 20. 2.
 &c.

strated unquestionably his Divine Commission, it was hard then to refuse Subjection unto him.

F. Thou observest wel. But *the greatest Force of al the Evangelical Dispensation remains yet behinde.* It lyes in that clear Evidence that he has given us of a *future Life*, in which we are to expect either *Rewards* or *Punishments* answerable to our Conduct in this. That was also requisite to make his Law stil more obligatory. And the great Advantage we have by him, above al the Discoverys of natural Light, is that the one gave but faint Glimmerings of that Truth; but the other has cleared it up like Noon-day, beyond al possibility of doubting. He taught it plainly, *declaring that his (b) Kingdom was not of this World; Exhorting us to lay*

John 18.
36.

lay up our (b) Treasure in Heaven, where it would be secure and incorruptible; Shewing us that the means of getting an (c) Entrance there was by the Practice of those Vertues that he had required; and that those who did (d) Good should at the last Day com forth unto the Resurrection of Life, but those who did Evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation. This, I say, was his Doctrine. And the Belief of this being of the greatest Importance, He was not content to confirm it onely by that general Credit which his other Miracles acquired him; but he also (e) foretold both his own Death and Resurrection, and after having suffered the one, he (f) accomplished the other; that so he might, by a peculiar Miraele, adapted to the very Case, prove the Truth

bMatt. 5. 20.
Luke 12. 33.

c Matt. 25.
31. &c.

d John 5. 29

e Matt. 17.
22, 23.

Mar. 9. 31.

Luke 18. 32.

33.

Matt. 20. 18.

19.

f Matt. 28. 68

Ag. 1. 3.

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Truth of this Doctrine even by
ocular Demonstration. Thus
b 2 Tim. 1.
10. it is, that *by him* Life(b) and Im-
mortality ar brought to light.
Not onely his own, but Ours.
c 1 Cor. 15.
12. For *that is the* (c) *Consequence the*
1 Thes. 4. 14. *Apostles always firmly main-*
1 Pet. 1. 3. *tained.* And the Application
they made of that Consequence
to Practice was, that those
who admitted it should liv an-
swerably to the Hopes it gave
them; that is to say, (d) *Sober-*
Tit. 2. 12,
13. *ly, Righteously, and Godlily, in al*
e 2 Pet. 3. 11. (e) *Holy Conversation,* (f) *Blame-*
f 2 Pet. 3. 14. *less and without Spot,* (g) *clean-*
g 2 Cor. 7. 1. *sed from al Filthiness of Flesh*
and Spirit, perfecting Holiness
b 1 Joh. 3. 3. *in the fear of God, and* (h) *puri-*
fying themselves even as God
is Pure; to the end that by such
i Rom. 2. 7. (i) *strict Continuance in wel-*
doing they might obtain Eternal
Life.

S. You

5. You have great Reason to represent this as *the utmost Force of the Gospel*. It is indeed the same in kinde with that wherewithal I concluded my Disquisitions, but infinitely stronger, and more proper to incline Men's Wils, and binde them to the exact Performance of their Duty. And now I am abundantly satisfied that these several Advantages, which as you say occur unto us by *Jesus Christ*, do perfectly supply those Defects and Imperfections under which our natural Condition labored. But that being so, I perceiv the great Importance of another Inquiry, which might indeed more naturally have preceded these Explications of yours, but is not yet unseasonable. It is this. Seing the *Gospel of Jesus-Christ* is so proper

proper and efficacious a Means to direct and help us in those Ways which lead to Eternal Happiness, I would gladly know by what kinde of Proof we may be fully assured of its Truth: I mean, that *such Things were really said and done as are therein recorded*. For there lys the Stress of the whole Matter. And it behooves us to see that the Foundations be very sure, upon which we build so important a Structure as this is.

F. Thou judgest rightly of the great Importance of the Inquiry thou now makest. For if the *History of Jesus-Christ* be not tru, then are al Consequences drawn from thence vain and frivolous. But if it be tru that he *said and did* what the *Evangelists* record of him, then are al my foregoing Conclusions

elusions strong. Now the Proof hercof appears to me most evident in the *historical Series* of what followed his Appearance. It is matter of fact that we inquire after : viz. *That he liv'd, and taught, as is recorded of him; and that he confirmed his Teaching during his Life by Miracles; and much more after his Death, by his Resurrection.* This is attested by the *Apostles, Disciples, and primitive Christians* : in whom therefore we ar to examin two things : First, Their *Capacity* to judg of what they saw and heard, (I mean onely that they did really see and hear it :) and then their *Fidelity* in reporting it. Now the *Capacity* necessary to discern such apparent matters of fact as ar the foundation of Christianity, is final, that every Man of
G
common

common sense is sufficiently endowed with it: and therefore it cannot be doubted of in those Witnesses. Their *Fidelity* has several Confirmations: as, *The exemplary Purity and unblamableness of their (b) Carriage in al other respects: their (c) Disinterestedness even in this respect, in that they sought no worldly Advantage by their Testimony: nay more, their Suffering al manner of (d) Persecution, and even (e) Death it self, for confirmation of its Truth: and finally the concurrent Testimony from Heaven which accompanied their Ministry, by inabling Them (even as Christ himself) to work Signes (f) and Wonders and divers Miracles.* Let this be applyed to those who were themselves Ey-witnesses of our Savior's performances, those many Thow

b 2 Cor. 1.

12.

i Thes. 2:

10.

e Act. 2. 33,

34.

2 Thes. 3. 8.

d Act. 8. 1:

i Cor. 4. 11,

12.

2 Tim. 3. 11.

e Act. 7. 58.

13c.

f Mark. 16.

20.

Act. 19. 11.

12.

Heb. 2. 4.

who saw and believed in him. Then let us look into the Fruit of their Ministry, *the historical Series* of things as I even now called it. After his Death *these Witnesses spread themselves into several (b) Regions and Countreys, & (c) Millions were convinced of the Truth of their report, by the irresistible Evidence which they gave of it.* These Millions again produced others, *being al accompanied with a divine (d) Blessing, and very many (during the first Ages) with a (e) divine Power,* so long til Christianity over spread, in a manner, the face of the whole Earth. This is plain Matter of Fact. The Records these things, whether in the Gospel it-self, or in the *(f) Historys of the next succeeding Ages,* do al agree in the same account therof. And since that time, those Re-

b Act. 9. 4. 5.
Act. 11. 19.
Act. 16. 8.
Act. 27. 1.
Act. 28. 12.
c Act. 2. 41.
Act. 4. 4.
d 2 Cor. 10.
e Act. 4. 31.
Act. 10. 44.
Rom. 15. 17.

f See the
Authors
quoted be-
low Folio.

87.

cords have, through the succession of several Ages, been conveyed unto us, with the same, or *greater*, certitude than any other History of such Antiquity can boast of. I say, not only with the same, but *greater* Certitude. For the Memorials of other Historys are now nowhere to be found but in Books or Monuments. Not only Emperors are dead, but their Empires also are buried in a confused Chaos of vicissitudes: so that there remains no living Witness, no real Effect now operating upon the mindes of men, that can be an Argument they ever subsisted. But with the History of *Jesus Christ* it is otherwise. *For the World is yet full of living Christians. And therefore it cannot be doubted that Jesus Christ had once an existence amongst men.* Unless
 som

some other Reason could be assigned for the spreading of his Name and Religion throughout the Earth, and the propagating of it from generation to generation, than what I have now touched at, it must be allowed that these two Propositions, viz. That *there are now Christians in the World*, and that *their first Author was Jesus Christ*, are chained together by the same necessity as *Effect and Cause*. But none have yet dared to undertake so manifest an Absurdity. Even the boldest *Atheists*, who have attempted to give some account of the Existence of the Universe without the concurrence of a Deity, have not presumed to give the least explanation how it could be possible there should be now any such People as *Christians* in the

World if there had not once been such a Person as *Jesus Christ*. Therefore it is even as absurd to doubt that he once was (together with the forementioned Consequences of his being) as to doubt that we our selves now ar. This is but a light Touch- at som of those numerous Arguments which the subject affords. But the Importance of it deservs thy strictest Application in examining them al. Wherefore I recommend those *Authors* who have expresly treated this matter to thy most serious Study. In them thou wilt finde al these Allegations that I hint at, and much more to the same purpose, both proved and illustrated. Many there ar who have labored in that province: But it shal suffice me now to address thee unto those that I
am

am my self best acquainted withal. They ar, The incomparable *Grotius*, in his excellent *Treatise of the Truth of the Christian Religion*: Our Country-man *Dr. Parker* in his *Demonstration of the divine Authority of the Law of Nature and of the Christian Religion*; and the French *Monsieur Abbadie*, in his *Treatise (also) of the Truth of the Christian Religion*. These *Authors* have al handled this Subject, in their Different Methods, with so much Strength and Clearness, that I cannot forbear to affirm (in *Dr. Parker's* words) that *they ar sufficient to give Satisfaction, in that point, to any Reasonable, or almost to any Unreasonable Man.*

S. I am much obliged to you for giving me this present

prospect of the *Proofs of Christian Religion*, and shal not fail to observ your Directions in the further *study of those Authors* that you recommend unto me. Nothing is so important as this ; and therefore nothing shal have so much of my care. This is indeed so very important, that, supposing a Satisfaction therin, I scarce know any thing else worth the while to inquire after. And if I could perfectly attain to that freedom from al preoccupation which you required from me in the begining of this Entertainment, I should certainly here cease from troubling you with any further Difficultys. For I must acknowledge that I have now none left but such as arise from those confused Notions which I had formerly

formerly perhaps too carelessly heaped together. Nevertheless I confess that som of them yet stick with me; and the little relation that I can finde they have unto this even Path, wherein you conduct me, leavs yet som relicks of uneasiness in my minde.

F. Fear not to propound them, whatever they ar. We shal perhaps finde som more easy, and more general Way to solv them than thou art aware of.

S. If it be so indeed, That *the Way to Eternal Happiness ly's onely in the strict Performance of those Dutys which the Nature of Things, the Law of God, requires from us*; what shal we then say to al that ceremonial Outside of Religion which bears so glorious an Appearance in the Eys of the World?

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World? How shal we esteem al those *notional Systems of Theology, those numerous Articles of speculative Belief*, that have little or no Influence upon our Practice? And lastly, what shal we judg of the Condition of those *Persons who fall short of that Perfection in Practice, which these Rules require*? I know you see the full extent of these Questions, and therefore I desire not to descend into Particulars; but chuse rather to leav them in this general Form, that they may be the more fit to receive that general Answer which you make me expect.

F. Thou dost very wel. But now, before I enter upon that Answer, I think fitting to premise one Word in further Confirmation of thy Supposition, That *our Eternal Happiness does really*

really depend upon the Performance of our Duty. Tho' that Supposition be the plain Consequence of the strictest Reasoning we have been able to make by our natural Light, yet it will be useful unto us to observ also what Ground it has in Scripture. For we must remember that the View we are now taking of Religion is properly to be confined unto that Knowledge we have of it by Divine Revelation. And in this Method I think I shall establish the same Conclusion by as clear Testimony as it is possible for Words to express. If we examin it (*First*) by those figurative Expressions, of (a) knowing Christ, of (b) loving Christ, of (c) believing in Christ, of (d) being in Christ, of (e) being born of God, and the like, which all import

a 1 John 2.

3, &c.

b John 14.

21.

John 15-10,

14.

1 John 2. 5.

2 John 6.

c Jam. 2. 14.

1 John 5. 5.

d Rom. 8. 1.

Gal. 5. 21.

1 John 2. 6.

e Rom. 8. 14.

1 John 5. 4.

18.

1 Joh. 2. 29.

1 John 3. 9.

a Title to future Happiness, we shal finde no other *Mark* wherby to know that we ar in such a Condition, than by our *Obedience to God's Commandements.* Again: If we look into the great *End of Jesus-Christ's coming into the World,* we shal finde indeed that *it was to save us.* But how? By (f) *sanctifying us.*

f Matt. 1. 21.

Act. 3. 26.

Eph. 5. 25.

2 Cor. 5. 21.

1 John 3. 5.

g Heb. 5. 9.

It is said, That *he became the Author of Eternal Salvation.*

But to whom? To (g) *them*

that obey him. He offered him-

self a Sacrifice, and bare our

Sins in his own Body on the

Tree. But why? That we might

be (h) sanctified by his Offer-

ing, and that being (i) dead

unto Sin we should liv unto

Righteousness. He redeemed us,

also, it is tru. But from what?

From (k) Iniquity: And onely

consequentially thereunto, from

Punish-

h Heb. 10.

10.

i Cor. 5. 7, 8.

j Heb. 9. 14.

k 1 Pet. 2. 24.

k Tit. 2. 14.

l 1 Pet. 1. 18.

Punishment. This we must needs take to be the Sense of those Expressions, and that *the great Design of his Appearance was to (k) destroy the Works of the Devil.* For it is expressly said that *nothing (l) Unclean shal in any Wise enter into the new Jerusalem, and that no Man without (m) Holiness shal see God.* And hence it is that *Jesus-Christ himself* so plainly tels us that *it is not (n) every one that saith unto him Lord, Lord,* (which is to say, that acknowledges him to be the *Messiah*, or that believes in him so far onely as to pray unto him, and to expect Salvation by him) *that shal enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of the Father who is in Heaven.* And the *Apostles* also, therefore, so carefully precaution us against

k 1 Joh. 3. 8.

l Rev. 21. 27.

m Heb. 12. 14.

n Matt. 7. 21, &c.

against the *Mistake of Thinking that the* (a) *bearing of the Law could profit us any thing without the doing of it. Let*

a Rom. 2. 13. Jam. 1. 22. *no Man deceive you* (says (b) one of them) *he that doth Righteousness is Righteous, and he that committeth Sin is of the Devil: And* (c) *another, Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a Man soweth that shal he also reap. There lyes the Strefs of al: It is in doing. Or if this be not yet sufficient to prove it, we have but to reflect, in the last place, upon those Conditions by which the Scripture declares we shal be judged at the last Day. What ar those Conditions that will be then demanded in us, so as that with them we shal be received into Happiness, and without them condemned unto Misery? In one Word, they*

ar nothing else but Good ()
Works. Works of Piety, and
 of Charity. Such *Works* as we
 have already found to be re-
 quired from us, both by the
Natural and Written Law of
God. The Places that witness
 this Truth ar ful and clear:
 Wherefore I refer them (with
 al others that I hint at) to
 thy careful Perusal. And I
 think I may now conclude this
 Point firmly established; That
 the performance of our Duty is
 the onely Means by which we
 can expect Success in the work-
 ing out of our Happiness. Tho
 I had hinted at this before, yet
 thy last Questions have made
 me think it needful to repeat
 and fortify it.

S. And I can not but ac-
 knowledg that tho I was also
 in a great Measure perswaded
 of it before, yet I have now
 received

d Ps. 62. 12.
 Jer. 32. 19.
 Eccl. 12. 13,
 14.
 Ezek. 18. 26,
 &c.
 Ezek. 33. 10,
 &c.
 Matt. 16. 27.
 Matt. 25. 14,
 &c.
 Rom. 2. 5,
 &c.
 2 Cor. 5. 10.
 Rev. 20. 12,
 &c.

received a new Satisfaction in this clearer Conviction. But I see not yet the use you intend to make of it, in order to the solving my foresaid Difficultys: Because those Difficultys are grounded even upon the very Supposition that this Doctrin is true.

F. Thou wilt quickly perceive that Use. For this Principle, being once firmly established, will open us an easy Passage through all manner of Obstacles. Let us apply it to thy first Inquiry. *What shall we say to all the ceremonial Outside of Religion?* I answer, That it is just of so much true Value as it contributes Help to lead us in a Course of Obedience to the Will of God: And no more. For that is the only thing of Consequence unto us, and nothing is to be esteemed

med further than as it has a
Tendency therunto.

S. Since you keep so strictly to that Rule, I beg leave to ask one Question, by the by, before we proceed any further. And it is this: *Whether has this Ceremonial Outside any such real Influence upon that more substantial part of Religion which you place in Practice, or no?*

F. Yes, it has. The public Assembling of People to profess their Adoration of a supreme Deity is an Honor absolutely due unto that Deity, and in that Respect is it self a part of natural Religion. It is also a proper Means of preserving that awful Sense of Reverence towards the Deity in the Mindes of Men, which mightily curbs their disorderly Inclinations, and preserves Regularity and

H

Mode.

Moderation in their very Hearts. And further, it is a great *Help to the entertaining of Brotherly Lov amongst Neighbors*, and thereby to the Settlement and Peace and Well-Being of Societys. These are all essential Parts of our Duty. And therefore an *external Profession of Religion*, having so great an Influence thereupon, ought not to be slighted. But to prevent Mistake, I will add this Word: That, as several Circumstances, of Persons, of Time, and of Place, may require different Methods of making this outward Profession, because one may be more successful in some Occasions than in others, therefore it is not to be supposed that one and the same exact Form thereof is always necessary: But that several *Alterations may be allowed in this*

this Ceremonial Part, according to the Exigency of those Circumstances: And that which may soever contributes most at any time to the main End of Religion is then to be esteemed and chosen as the most perfect.

S. I now conceiv this well enough. And therefore I intreat you to proceed to my Second Inquiry, which is about the more Notional Part of Religion, *those Speculative Articles of Belief* which seem not proper to have any great Influence upon our Practice.

F. To that, I say, That if those Speculations have really no Influence at al upon our Practice, then ar they to be looked upon as meer Trifles, of no real Valu. But if they have any Influence that way, then, as I said before, they ar to be had in more or less Con-

sideration, according as that Influence is stronger or weaker.

The fundamental Point of all Points, without which the

a Heb. 11. 6.

(a) *Apostle* has observed there can be no such thing as Religion, is *the Belief of the Existence of a Deity, and of future Rewards and Punishments*. The

Influence of this is Universal, it being adapted to the natural Facultys of all Mankind; and especially to work upon those main Springs of Hope, and Fear, which are the chief Movers unto Action: And there-

b Rom. 1. 16,
18.

fore it is (b) called *the Power of God unto Salvation*: and it is in effect the powerfullest Engine of all others to engage Men to their Dutys. There are other Points also, inferior indeed to this in Strength and general Usefulness, tho of a more refined and nobler Na-

ture;

ture; yet of great Efficacy also, where they ar on the one side judiciously inculcated, and on the other side received into Mindes that ar fitly disposed; Such Points or Articles (I mean) of Belief, as Work by *a Principle of (a) Love*, and whose particular Foundation is in *Christianity*. But I judg it not needful to branch out these general Heads into so many Subdivisions as som have don. On the contrary, I rather blame the too great Curiosity of those Spirits, who by such like *Nicetys* have rendred our *plain Duty an intricate Science*; and by laying too great Stress upon Points of smal Moment, have enervated the Strength of the most substantial ones. Nevertheless I condemn not the Intention of any Man, who, finding the Force

a Rom. 5. 8.
2 Cor. 5. 14.
Gal. 5. 6.
Ephes. 2. 3.
Eph. 5. 2, 25.
1 John 4. 9
19

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of any such particular Topic upon his own Minde, makes use of it to incite himself to his Duty. Let him in that freely use his own Liberty. Onely let him not offer to impose his Fancys upon other People. For, when all is don, the true Estimate of Opinions, as well as Ceremonys, is only to be made by their Aptitude to influence our Practice. *Whatsoever may be helpful to us in the Performance of our Duty is to be pursued: Whatsoever may be a Hindrance in that Performance ought to be avoided; and whatsoever does neither help nor hinder may be looked upon as indifferent.* But, as all Men are not equally wrought upon by the same Motives, so there may and ought to be some Latitude allowed in this kinde as well as in the other.

S. I intreat you, permit me to interpose one Word more before we quit this Subject. The great Indifferency which you teach me to have for Doctrins that are meerly speculative, and the narrow Reduction of Things absolutely necessary to few Heads, which you seem to aim at, are so opposite both to the common Opinion and Practice of the most part of Christians, that I would gladly learn either how to comport my self amongst them in those Respects without Offence, or if possible, how to oppose them with yet more Strength. Wherefore if you judge any thing further may be conveniently added upon that Subject, I beseech you not to refuse me that Satisfaction.

F. Truly if thou attendest rightly to what I have said already

ready, there is little need of adding further. But however I wil do it in a few words, that may answer both those different Ends which thou aimest at. And, first, in opposition to those Multipliers of speculative and abstruse Notions. Let such Men consider that *the end of Religion is to help the meanest and the ignorantest of mankind to Salvation, as well as the richest and the learnedest. Any such Notions therefore as pass the comprehension of the meanest Capacitys are not to be reckoned as things whose knowledge is of absolute and indispensable necessity to every one. Because those that fall short of that comprehension would thereby be excluded from a possibility of Salvation. And I may add that it is to be feared even the subtillest of those*

Doctors

Doctors themselves would, in
som case, run great hazard. If
this simple Consideration wil
not make them more modest in
their speculations, and more re-
served in broaching them, it
may be justly doubted they are
wedded therunto by som other
Ty than the bare lov of the
Truth. But if they wil here-
upon complain of an imagina-
ry Injury don to them, in con-
fining their lofty Fancys to
that low rank of contemplati-
ons which occupy the vulgar,
thou mayst rectify their mis-
take by looking back to what
I have already declared unto
thee, viz. that every man
may make use of such specula-
tions as he findes really to
have the most effectual power
upon himself to ingage him to
the performance of his Duty.
Let that onely be their end;
and in order therunto let them
freely

freely exercise al the Facultys of their own Soules: the more the better. But I must stil repeat, that in matters of such abstracted Speculation as we now speak of, no Man ought to impole upon another. *One man's Opinions ought no more to be prescribed for the entertainment of another Man's minde, than one man's Appetite ought to be the rule of chusing food for another Man's Stomack.* Whatsoever is universally found useful by every one, either for Body or Minde, may be determined to be universally necessary: but nothing else. At least (I say at least) nothing can be determined to be universally necessary which the far greatest part of Mankind are utterly incapable of receiving. Oh that we could once see an expurgatory Index of School-divinity framed upon these Principles!

ciples ! How would the Peace of the World be restored and secured, by rooting out the very ground of al contention ! The work is not hard to comprehend. These Rules ar easily applied to particular Cases. But I must leav those general Reflections, to return to thee, and tel thee that if thou appliest what I have said to the design thou intimated'st of learning how to comport thy self amongst other Men of different Opinions, thou wilt perceiv therby that *things indifferent ar not worth the pains of contention*, nor can they compensate the Evils that may attend it : wherefore *a prudent compliance therin is for the most part adviseable*. But at the same time, nay always, thou art bound to *preserve thy own Thoughts inviolated in matters essential*:

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essential; and neither to Act nor declare any thing contrary therunto; and also not in any wise to be an Instrument of violating that Priviledg in others which thou claimest unto thy self.

The faithful observance of these Rules, this gentle and peaceable Disposition, wil (I assure thee) help much to carry thee smoothly through the roughest Passages that mayst happen to meet with in thy Life. And this is now ful enough for me to say upon that Head. The further application thereof I refer unto thy own Sagacity.

S. What you have said, is indeed abundantly sufficient. And I wil be careful to make use of it in my own Practice, with al possible Modesty and Inoffensiveness. Onely one Difficulty more remains, which

I have already propounded, about the Condition of those Persons who fall short of that Performance which your preceding Rules seem to require. But that Difficulty, I confess, seems to me very considerable, and withal something formidable. For I am sensible of the general Defectiveness of Mankind in that respect, and therefore dread the Consequences thereof in my own Person. If you can free me from that Anxiety I acknowledg that my Minde wil be at great Ease; and I shal then cease from importuning you any further with such manner of Questions as these have been.

F. Expect not that I should ease thee by any Dispensation from those Dutys which the Law of God exacts. No:

(a) *With him Obedience is better than*

a 1 Sam. 15.

22.

Ps. 51. 16. 17.

than Sacrifice. And I have already sufficiently proved that we can have no other certain Mark, but our Obedience, of our having *any Interest in the Sacrifice even of Christ himself.* That therefore is the thing that lyes upon us to look after ; To assure our Interest in him that way ; and then we need not doubt of our participating of those Benefits which he came to procure unto Mankind. I say then, That *our Obligation to actual Obedience is indispensable.* But nevertheless I would not have thee look upon it with so uncomfortable a Prospect as thou seemest to do. For tho I wil acknowledg it to be *hard,* yet I must assert that it is *not impossible* to be performed. And that being so, the Encouragements propounded ar abundantly sufficient to ingage any reasonable

reasonable Man in the Attempt. This Argument is Copious. But I wil indeavor, as I have don hitherto, to bring al to the shortest and directest Issu that I can. Remember then that in thy natural Researches, thou hast established one of the most essential Propertys of the supreme Deity to be *Goodness*. Now observ how inconsistent it is with that Idea, to suppose him to require more from us than he has capacitated us to perform. 'Tis the unjust Charge of *the slothful* (a) *Servant, that his Lord expected to reap where he had not sown*; than which nothing can be more injurious to the Divine Perfections. The Obedience therfore that he requires must be such as is suitable to the Capacity of Humane Nature accompanied with those
Assistan-

a Matt. 24.
24. 46.

Assistances which he affords it.

He expects not from us the

b1 Cor. 13.
9, &c.

Perfection (b) of pure Intellectual Spirits, but such things

as Men cloathed with Flesh may attain unto. And from

every Man in particular he expects Performances propor-

tionable to the particular Circumstances of his Condition.

This is perfectly reasonable in it self; and it is no less perfectly

established in Scripture. Our Savior declares in many

c Matt. 23.
20. &c.

Luke 10. 12.
17. &c.

Joh. 15. 22.
24.

places (c) that the Measure of Men's Transgressions should not

so much be taken by the Acts themselves, as by the measure of

Light and Conviction against which they were committed. And

d Luke 12.
47, &c.

in one Place (d) he dos it in these exprefs Words, *That the*

Servant who knew his Lord's Wil, and prepared not himself,

neither did according to his Wil.

Will, should be beaten with many Stripes: But that he who knew it not, and did commit things worthy of Stripes, should be beaten but with few. For (he adds) unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall he much require. Thus therefore it is evident that the Dutys required from us bear a (b) Proportion to the Knowledge, and Strength, and Opportunity, or (in a word) to the Capacity given us. So that they are not absolute Impossibilities, and therefore neither ought we to be dejected with despair of their Attainment.

b Rom. 12.
3. &c.
Eph. 4. 7.
&c.

S. I can not well answer either your Argument or your Proof. But nevertheless I finde in effect, by Experience, that all Mankind are much short of Perfection. And therefore this seeming Appearance of it in
I Theory

Theory does not yet free me from those Anxieties which arise from its manifest and real Defect.

F. Have Patience a little. We shall quickly come to a better understanding of the thing. Thou allowest my Proof to be good, that the Perfection required from us is attainable; but yet thou affirmest that in effect it is never attained. These things are inconsistent one with another. Let us inquire therefore whether there be not some *Mistake in thy Notion of Perfection.* For probably it is in this as in other Debates, that the Knot lies only in the right Explication of some Term. Our Wranglings are ordinarily more about Words than Things, and *most Men would be of the very same Mind, if they did but once rightly understand one another.*

This

This Mistake of thine (for such I presume it to be) I had designed to obviate, by telling thee already that the Obedience required from us is such as is suitable to the Capacity of Humane Nature. Now I desire thee to observe that if thou lookest for such a Degree of Perfection in that Obedience as is absolutely above that Capacity, thou art in a manifest Error : For that can not be the Degree that is required from us. Let us see then what it is. The Expressions truly are very comprehensive and strong : *viz. That we must be Holy, Pure, and Perfect, as our Father who is in Heaven is Perfect.* Well, what can this signify ? The absolute Perfection of God is certainly not attainable by such Creatures as we are. Wherefore the Sense of that,

and al such like Commands, must needs be, that as the Nature and Essence of God is placed in the highest Degree of al Perfection, so We should tend to the highest Degree of that Perfection which our Natures ar capable of; and that we should faithfully improve the Talents that ar put into our Hands, the Opportunities and Advantages that ar offered us, to that purpose. *This, I say, is positively required of us, and less than this wil not serve the Turn.*

S. I beg your excuse that I cannot yet yield a ful assent to what you drive at, until you pleasto explain more particularly to me *what is that very degree of perfection which you say our Natures ar capable of*, that so I may examin whether in effect it be ever attained or no.

F. Thou

F. Thou dost wel: and I wil endeavor to satisfy thee. Remember then that it is *not* the Perfection of God, nor of Angels, but of Men: and that neither is it the same Degree of Perfection in each individual Man, but different according to Men's different capacitys. In a word, it is not (b) Impeccability, but (c) Sincerity. And now I wil further shew thee what this Sincerity means; and that it is the very thing required of us; as also that it is attainable; and that it has been attained. After which I advise thee to dispute no longer about it, but to apply thy self to practice, and let the effects therof shine forth in thy life. *Sincerity is nothing else but an Honest, Upright, Hearty, and constant application of Minde, accompanied with the same faith-*

b 1 King. 8.
46.
Eccl. 7. 20.
1 John 1. 8,
10.
Jam. 3. 2.
c 1 Cor. 5. 8.
Tir. 2. 7.

ful exertion of al possible endeavors, to do the thing required.

It is the doing of al that possibly can be don, and not more. That

this is required appears from God's demanding the whole

6 Deut. 10.

12.

Matt. 22. 37.

4 Matt. 6. 24.

Luke. 16. 13.

(c) Heart, and declaring the (d) inconsistency of his service

with that of the World: I say this shows that he requires the

utmost exercise of al our Powers in the obeying of his Com-

mandements. And where the Heart is thus sincere and up-

right, the Intention honest, and the Minde willing, I do

not say that the wil is taken for the deed, but I affirm that

the Deed is accepted according to the Measure of the Capacity,

22 Cor. 3. 12.

(e) according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not. And hence it is that in

1 Chron.

29. 9.

Scripture a willing (f) Heart is frequently stiled a perfect Heart.

And

And the *Apostle Paul* (f) in f Phil. 3. 12, 15. the same place where he acknowledges that he *had not really attained to Perfection, but was onely pressing forwards towards it, nevertheless accounts himself amongst the number of those that are perfect*: undoubtedly, because his endeavors were sincere and constant. Now that this sort of Perfection is attainable is evident in it self, beyond any Proof that can be made of it. For *it is nothing else but doing all that ever a Man can do.* And surely no Man is so absurd as to deny the possibility of his doing what he can do. But here it wil be good to subjoin, that this notion of doing all a Man can do is not a palliation for gross and frequent miscarriages. On the contrary, it is an absolute obligation to overcome them. For there is no Man but by a constant

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watchfulness may be so far Master of his own actions as not to fall frequently into the same known fault. Let us consider it in a familiar example. What so common as *Swearing*? Now can it be doubted but any habitual Swearer may, with a strong Resolution and diligent Care, retain himself one quarter of an Hour from that Sin? Surely it can not. But if a quarter of an Hour, why not then half an Hour, why not an Hour, a Day, a Week, a Month, a Year? The same Care will still produce the same Effect. And not only so, but the Work will be more easy in the End than in the Beginning. For the strength of the Habit, which in the Beginning swayed powerfully towards Vice, and made the first Resistance difficult,

wyl

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wil in the End help as effectually towards the Work of Reformation, and make the Conquest easy. Then wil be experienced the Truth of those Sayings, *That the Commandments of Christ ar not (a) grievous, but that his (b) Yoke is easy and his Burden light.* And what I say on this particular Instance of Swearing wil hold in al other known Transgressions. *Resolution and Watchfulness wil overcome them.* He that makes it as much his Business to reform his Life as another dos to learn some Trade, or Art, wil succeed as effectually in that Design as the other in this. The one may fail now and then: But in the main he practises his Art exactly, and is therefore reputed a perfect Master. And so the other, tho he be not exempt from

a 1 John 5.3.

b Matt. 11.

30.

from al possibility of Miscarriage, yet he can not chuse but attain to *such a Conquest over Sin, as that it shal have*
a Rom. 6. 12. *no longer any (a) Rule over him, and to such a general and habitual Practice of Vertu as may truly denominate him a righteous Person. And doing so, that Man may have Comfort; for the Scripture is most evidently clear that his*
b Prov. 28. *(b) former Transgressions shal*
II. 1. 16, 13. *be no longer imputed unto him,*
II. 55. 7. *but that by Perseverance in an*
Ez. 3. 18, 19. *habitual Course of wel-doing he*
Ez. 18. *shal save his Soul. Thus then,*
Ez. 33. *I say, this Perfection is at-*
Rom. 2. 7. *tainable; and with it, Hap-*
piness. The Importance is,
That we apply our selvs heart-
ily to the Work: For where
such Application is real, it fails
not to be effectual. In the last
Place, I have promised to shew
thee

thee that this sort of Perfection, I say, *perfect Sincerity*, has in effect been attained: And for that I here give thee a List (a) of divers Persons who are recorded to have thereby experienced both Comfort and Assurance in their Condition. I will add no more. But to conclude, because of the Importance of the Matter, I refer thee, for the removal of all other Doubts upon it, unto that honest and plain, yet excellent, Discourse of the Reverend Dr. Tillotson's upon 1 John 3. 10. (*In this the Children of God are manifest, and the Children of the Devil: Whosoever doth not Righteousness is not of God.*) which single Sermon of his will teach thee more solid and useful Religion than many Volumes of notional and disputative Authors.

a 2Kin. 20. 3.

Neh. 13. 14.

22.

Job 27. 5, 6.

Job 31. 6.

Psal. 7. 8.

Psal. 26.

Is. 38. 3.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

Luke 1. 6.

S. I can not but now acknowledge that this *Scheme* you have given me of *Christian Religion* is so plain and intelligible in all its Parts, so suited to the *Facultys* of *Humane Nature*, and so agreeable to the revealed *Will* of *God* in *Scripture*, that I am constrained to acquiesce in every thing you have said. And the great Clearness that I now perceive therein makes me astonished at the Perverseness of those Men, Who, rather than follow the Guidance of this Light, and walk in that *Even Path* which it discovers unto them, chuse to throw themselves into intricate and obscure Labyrinths, where they have no Assistance in their Conduct but from the faint and uncertain Glances of dark or dazeling Mysterys; or, to use a *Scripture Metaphor*,
 who

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who (a) forsake the Fountain of Living Waters, and hew out unto themselves Cisterns, broken Cisterns, that can hold no Water.

^a Jer. 2. 13.

F. Thy Astonishment is not without Caus. Yet the Reason of this Miscarriage may be easily perceived. Interest in the Guides or Governors, and Ignorance in the general Herd of Men, contribute much unto it. But our Savior himself has shown us the great Reason thereof, in telling us that (b) Men love Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are Evil. They are conscious to themselves of the Evil of their Doings, and are loath to be at the Pains of reforming: And therefore they endeavor to frame unto themselves such a System of Religion as they fancy may save them

^b Joh. 3. 19.

2 Thes. 2.
30, 31.

Rom. 13.
12.
Eph. 5. 11.
Matt. 5. 16.

them in their Sins, rather than from their Sins. *This is the great Obstacle to the Advancement of Truth, that they (a) receiv not the Lov of it, but have Pleasure in Unrighteousness.* But without troubling our selvs further in searching out the Occasion of these Men's Miscarriage, I again exhort thee, unto whom this tru Light now shineth, that thou make it thy special Care to (b) *cast off the unfruitful Works of Darkness, and to let (c) thy Light so shine before Men that they may see thy good Works, and glorify the Father who is in Heaven.* That wil be a far more effectual way of convincing them, than al that I have said has been to convince thee.

S. I thankfully receiv your Admonition, and resolv now to cease al useless Inquisitiveness,

ness, and by the Grace of God, to apply my self so diligently to the Regulation of my Life by these Rules, that I may in the end be made Partaker of that Happiness which attends the Observance of them; and that you may, in the mean time, receive the Comfort to see that your Labor has not been bestowed upon me in vain.

F. The good God, I beseech him, strengthen thy honest Resolutions, and crown them with a suitable Success. To facilitate thy Work, I will sum up all in a few Words, and then leave thee to his Blessing. Thou hast learnt that *the Substance of true Religion consists neither in Ceremonys nor Notions, but in Sincerity and Practice. It lyes not in outward*
 (a) *Profession and Shew; not in*
 (b) *Meats and Drinks, and other*

a Rom. 2. 28.

29.

Gal. 6. 15.

b Heb. 9. 13.

other carnal Ordinances ; not in
 c H. I. II, (c) Sacrifices, tho even of God's
 &c. own Appointment ; not in (d)
 d Jam. 2. 14. Faith ; nay not in (e) Gifts,
 e I Cor. 13. 2, &c. how excellent soever ; nor even
 in the knowledg of deepest Mi-
 sterys. These things indeed
 ar Means and Instruments. But
 f Rom. 14. 17. the End of al is (f) Righte-
 oness, and the Effect therof is
 Peace and Joy in the Holy
 Ghost. What God requires at
 our Hands, towards himself, is
 g John 4. 23, 24. That we adore him in (g) Spi-
 rit and in Truth. What he
 requires of us towards our
 Neighbors, is (h) Brotherly-
 Kindness, and Charity. St.
 h I Cor. 13. 1, &c. James explains this last Branch,
 i Pet. 1. 7. in telling us, that (i) pure Re-
 ligion and undefiled before God,
 i Jam. 1. 27. the Father, consists in visiting
 the Fatherless and Widdows in
 their Affliction, and in keeping
 our selvs unspotted from the
 World.

World. And the Prophet *Micah* comprehends both Branches, in requiring us, *To do* (a) *a Mic. 6. 8.*
justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.

These then are the Eternal and indispensable Laws of God to Mankind. The Gospel of Jesus-Christ is so far from dispensing therewithal, that its great Design is to enforce them more strongly, and to binde us therunto more firmly than either the Law of Nature, or the Law of Moses had don before.

It teaches us that to fear (b) *b 49. 10. 15. Rom. 14. 18.*
God, and to work Righteousness, are the means to procure Acceptance with him, and to secure

our (c) Happiness both here *c 1 Pet. 3. 11. 17. Matt. 10. 2. 2 Tim. 2. 3. d 1 Tim. 2. 5.*
and hereafter. Wherefore waste not thy self about useless (d)

Questions, and verbal Controversys, avoid (e) profane and
vain Babblings, and Opposition

K of

- of Science, falsely so called: For
 a 1 Tim. 6. 4. 5. thereof com (a) Envy, Strife,
 Railings, evil Surmisings,
 perverse Disputations, Uncha-
 ritableness, and al manner of
 b Tit. 2. 1. &c. Evil. But study thou the (b)
 things which becom sound Doc-
 trin, to know thy Duty in al
 Occasions, and to do it. Be
 c Tit. 3. 8. careful to (c) maintain good
 d 1 Tim. 6. 13. Works: Be (d) rich therein:
 e 1 Tim. 6. 19. Make thy self a (e) Store ther-
 of against the Time to come, for
 they wil inable thee to lay hold
 f 1 Tim. 4. 7, 8. on Eternal Life: Exercise (f)
 thy self continually unto Godli-
 ness, for that hath the Promiss
 both of the Life that now is,
 and of that which is to com.
 Now that thou mayst always
 remember these Instructions,
 g Prov. 4. 21. that they may not (g) depart
 from thine Eys, but be deeply
 h Prov. 3. 3. ingraven even (h) upon the
 Table of thy Heart (becaus in-
 deed

deed they wil be (i) Health to i Prov. 3. 8.

thy Navel, and marrow to thy
Bones) I wil seal them up

with the Words of aged Da-
vid; and as he to his Son So-
lomon, so I advise thee, my

Son, (k) Know thou the God k i Chron. 28. 9.

of thy Father, and serve him
with a perfect Heart, and with

a willing Minde: For the Lord
searcheth al Hearts, and under-

standeth all the Imaginations of
the Thoughts: If ihou seek him

he wil be found of thee, but if
thou forsake him he will cast

thee off for ever.

T H E E N D.

K 2

ADVICE

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and they will be (i) 187

and many to the

and I will feel them up

with the words of 187

and as he says in 187

and I will feel them up

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Advice to a Son.



MY Dear and onely Son,
Now that thy infant Years ar done,
Al childish Toys at once giv o're.
To manly Thoughts thy Minde prepare.
Receiv these Marks of my paternal Care;

K 3

And

Advice to a Son.

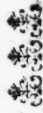
And lend both *Ear* and *Heart* unto my *Lore*.

A Father's Lore no less requires.

'Tis *Lov*, pure *Lov*, that it inspires,

Lov without Mixture of base Ends,

Lov that from *Heav'n* proceeds, and thither tends.



Be Wise.

Al that ever Mortals prize;

Honor, Pleasure,

Power, Treasure;

Ar oft obtain'd,

Oftner disdain'd;

Advice to a Son.

But still, with or without them, *Happiness* is gain'd
By what that Syllable implies.

Wisdom! O comprehensive Theme!

Who can fathom, who can teach,

How far *Wisdom's* Pow'r doth reach?

He that attempts to draw that Scheme

Must soar full high, full deep must pierce,

Must lustrate all the Universe.

Wisdom through each part does dispense

A constant vigorous Influence.

To meanest Works she gently bends,

To highest nobly she ascends,

And unto all her self extends.

Her

Advice to a Son.

Her Voice Divine, of Laws the best,
 Secretly penetrates each Breast;
 Is felt more eas'ly than exprest;
 And known to him that silently attends.



Hail glorious Fountain of Eternal Light!

Thy great Idea grows too bright.

Either increase and strengthen my weak Sight,
 Or check my too adventurous Flight.

Teach Me, that I may teach thy Ways,

In humble, modest Lays,

Conceiv'd with eas, and eas'ly understood;

Do

Advice to a Son.

Do thou reduce

My wand'ring Thoughts to use ;

And teach that to be *Wise* is to be *Good*.



Blest Conjunction, happy Band,
Wisdom and *Virtu* hand in hand !

Blest Soul that yields to their supreme Command !

By mutual Helps they guide us as we go :

The first Step is to *know*, the next to *do*.

And the search of *Knowledge* too, from thence

We learn this useful Inference ;

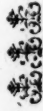
That tho *She* various Objects may present,

Son

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ADVICE TO A SON

Som for Delight, and som for Ornament;
To each of which, our studious Mindes to cheer,

Som Moments may be fitly giv'n;
Yet none deservs our Soul's main bent,
Nor wholly clears from Guilt of Time mis-spent,
But what directs our *Practice* here,
And leads to *Hear'n*.



'Tis in *Religion's School* we learn that Skil:
Not human Schools, which al with Noys do fil.
Deep Truth, like Rivers deep, runs smooth and stil.
Religion, Sov'rain Mistress of Man's Life,
Is in those Schools so rudely tost,

The

Advice to a Son.

The Bond of Peace becomes the Bal of Strife,

And oft is in the Hurry lost.

The Learn'd, forsooth, in *Notions* so delight,
That for meer *Notions* they contend and fight;
Notions contest so high that they escape our Sight.

Whilst Vulgar Souls, alas, to Earth deprest
In *Shews of Pageantry* take up their rest,
And onely for *Corporeal Rites* contest.

Thus most pursue an empty Name,

A Fantom which themselves do frame;

(*Solid Religion* few discover:)

And therefore, erring in their Aim,

Must needs shoot shorter over.

Religion

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Advice to a Son.



Religion ne'ertheless subsists.

Nay She in *obvious Truth* consists.

'Tis we that her involv, then seek, in Mists.

Hence al *Chimeras* vain,

The vap'rous Products of a heated Brain.

Her Seat is in the *Heart*.

Hence al adult'rate Drefs of Art.

Her native Beauty shines through ev'ry part;

And al her Paths ar streight, her Precepts plain.

Her School stands open. Hark! She bids us look,

Whilst She unfolds her *Double Book*,

God's

Addice to a Son.

God's Word, and Nature's Law.

"These Two (says She) al Truth contain,

" And Each the Other best explain.

" Who reads but One may false Conclusions draw,

" But who compares them Both ne'er misses in the main.



" You that will learn (again She crys)

" Reflect on your short Possibilitys;

" And frame not Projects vain above the Skys.

" Your several Relations view;

" And render, as you can, to each its due.

" Do

Advice to a Son.

" Do not so much aspire

" At Speculations high'r, &c.

" As unto what you know fit to be tru.

" For I no Task abov your Force require;

" And Knowledge best by Practice wil accru.

" To God pay pure and humble Adoration.

" To Man bear Universal Lov.

" Let Reason in each Breast rule ev'ry Passion.

" Al Dutys on these Hinges move.

" Meditate on their Use, and it improve.

" The Opposite to these is Sin;

" Ore which a Vict'ry sure to win,

" Consult, believ, obey your God within.

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Addice to a Son.



She said. And I, *my Son*, wil ad no more.

Thesē Truths ar pregnant. Fil thy Store;

Then Til, then sow thy Ground. Blow thine own Spark;

And fit not sleeping in the Dark.

Be bold; but cautious. On, with docil Minde,

And with Integrity of Breast.

In following her Instructions thou shalt finde,

Or safely mayst ignore, the rest.

T H E E N D.

ERRATA.

Page 5. line 1. for *this*, read *his*, p. 15.
l. 8. f. *flora*, r. *rash*. p. 32. l. 7. f.
Or rather, r. *Or rather*. p. 83. l. 20. f.
Records these, r. *Records of these*. p. 71. f.
k Pet. 1. 15. r. k 1 Pet. 1. 15.

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4
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1